

















A HISTORY OF  
AMERICAN LITERATURE

WITH A VIEW TO THE

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING  
ITS DEVELOPMENT

*A TEXT-BOOK FOR SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES*

BY ✓

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## PREFACE

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IN the preparation of this history of the rise and development of American literature the author has had clearly in mind the limitations to which every text-book on literature must be subject. Such a work can be at best only directive. It can trace the influences of race, environment, and epoch, and indicate causes and results; it can insist that the student follow the logical order, rejecting everything not worthy of his attention and emphasizing sufficiently the emphatic points; it can furnish him with a plan for estimating the personality and influence of each individual author; but more it cannot do. No one ever learned literature from a text-book, not even when it was supplemented by copious extracts from the authors considered. Fragments of an author's writings, like fragments of any work of art, give only vague ideas of the whole. He who has studied merely "Thanatopsis" or "Evangeline" knows very little of Bryant or Longfellow. A knowledge of "Rip Van Winkle" provides the key to only a very small part of Irving's domain. Actual contact with all of the important writings of the leading

authors is imperative if one would understand a literature. The text-book that does not emphasize this and aim merely to guide the student and supplement his efforts is superfluous. The conning of names and dates, of details and characteristics, of criticisms of books that the pupil has never seen, if not supplemented by copious draughts from the living fountain heads, can but result in mental stagnation and a loathing of the entire subject.

Throughout this work the author has endeavored to follow the development of the American spirit and of American thought under the agencies of race, environment, epoch, and personality. He has recognized that the literature of a nation is closely entwined with its history, both civil and religious. As far as possible he has made the authors speak for themselves, and he has supplemented his own estimates by frequent criticisms from the highest authorities; but in presenting these criticisms he has not aimed to do the student's work for him, nor to furnish ready-made estimates for him to commit to memory without having examined the works criticised; but, rather, to provide information that should lead to an intelligent study of the author or book in hand.

This book implies other books. It should not be taught without them. If the school library is deficient, they may be had from some private or public collection. Some of the more important works, as those of Irving,



Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and the like, may surely be procured by any class. The amount of reading done must, necessarily, depend upon the length of the course and the nature of the class. The directions as to what books shall be read are largely suggestive. Much must be left to the judgment of the teacher, with whom, indeed, it rests whether the study shall be helpful and stimulating or dry and lifeless.

The author gratefully acknowledges his obligations to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, Messrs. Flood & Vincent, and Messrs. Lee & Shepard, who have permitted the use of extracts from their copyrighted works, and to all others who have in any way aided in the preparation of the volume.

F. L. P.

STATE COLLEGE, PA.,  
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## BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

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### UNITED STATES HISTORY.

Bancroft's History of the United States, 1492-1789.  
Hildreth's History of the United States, 1492-1820.  
Cooke's Virginia.  
Fiske's Beginnings of New England.  
Parkman's France and England in North America.  
Fiske's American Revolution.  
Fiske's Critical Period of American History, 1783-1789.  
Schouler's History of the United States, 1783-1861.  
MacMaster's History of the People of the United States, 1783-1861.  
Adams' History of the United States, 1801-1817.  
Benton's Thirty Years' View, 1820-1850.  
Drake's Making of the Great West.  
Roosevelt's Winning of the West.  
Greeley's American Conflict.  
Davis' Rise and Fall of the Confederacy.  
Nicolay and Hay's Abraham Lincoln.  
Blaine's Twenty Years in Congress, 1862-1882.  
Andrews' History of Our Own Day, 1869-1895.

### LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM.

Welsh's English Literature and Language.  
Taine's English Literature.  
Tyler's American Literature.  
Richardson's American Literature.  
Stedman's Poets of America.  
Whipple's American Literature, Essays and Reviews.  
Nichol's American Literature.  
Beers' Outline Sketch of American Literature.  
White's Philosophy of American Literature.  
Curtis' Literary and Social Essays.  
Higginson's Short Studies of American Authors.



Lowell's A Fable for Critics, Among My Books.  
 Whittier's Literary Recreations.  
 Haweis' American Humorists.  
 Julian Hawthorne's Confessions and Criticisms.  
 Stewart's Evenings in a Library.  
 Deshler's Afternoons with the Poets.  
 Scudder's Men and Letters.  
 Vedder's American Writers of To-day.  
 Tappan's Topical Notes on American Authors.

### BIOGRAPHY.

Warner, Editor, American Men of Letters Series.  
 Morse, Editor, American Statesman Series.  
 Whipple's Recollections of Eminent Men.  
 Curtis' Homes of American Authors.  
 S. K. Bolton's Famous American Authors.  
 Franklin's Autobiography completed by Bigelow.  
 Irving's Life of Washington.  
 Tyler's Three Men of Letters.  
 Irving's Life of Irving.  
 Godwin's Life of Bryant.  
 Cabot's Life of Emerson.  
 Hawthorne's Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife.  
 Longfellow's Life of Longfellow.  
 Pickard's Life of Whittier.  
 Morse's Life of Holmes.

### GENERAL AUTHORITIES AND COLLECTIONS.

Stedman and Hutchinson's Library of American Literature.  
 Poole's Index to Magazine Literature.  
 Appleton's Cyclopædia of Biography.  
 Allibone's Dictionary of Authors.  
 Adams' Handbook of American Authors.  
 Smith's Synopsis of English and American Literature.  
 Beers' Century of American Literature.  
 Cleveland's Handbook of American Literature.  
 Underwood's Builders of American Literature.  
 Johnson's American Orations.



# AMERICAN LITERATURE.

## I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

DEFINITION. — "Literature is the class of writings distinguished for beauty of style or expression, as poetry, essays, or history, in distinction from scientific treatises and works which contain positive knowledge." — *Webster*.

THE literature of a nation is the entire body of literary productions that has emanated from the people of the nation during its history, preserved by the arts of writing and printing. It is the embodiment of the best thoughts and fancies of a people.

The History of a Literature is not merely a chronological record of all the writers and writings of a language. It is much more; it is, in reality, the history of the evolution of the language and of the intellectual development of the people. It should constantly inquire into the causes that tended to produce literature of one kind and not of another. It should trace the influence of great writers upon their language and their times. It should be a guide, ever leading the student to the best books, training his judgment so as to enable him to estimate critically literary productions, and

teaching him the true place that every book and author occupies in the world of letters.

**Fundamental Principles.** — To pursue the study of a literature to the best advantage one needs a thorough knowledge of the language, history, social customs, and spirit of the people that produced it, as well as a general idea of the geography and climate of their country.

The great agencies which determine the character of a literature must be borne constantly in mind :

1. *Race.* — The hereditary disposition of the makers of the literature must first be noted. The races inhabiting the warmer climates are naturally impulsive, with strong passions. The northern races are more cold and reserved. These characteristics are stamped upon the literary product of these races.

2. *Environment.* — The surroundings of a people have a great effect upon their intellectual development. What of the climate? Is the land fertile and easy to work, or does it compel the husbandman to expend great energy upon it? Is it subject to depressing fogs, like Britain, or to violent extremes of temperature like Norway? Is it mountainous like Greece, or flat like Holland? Is it inland like Russia, or maritime like England? It is this agency that gives color to a literature.

3. *Epoch.* — What was the spirit of the age? What has been the history of the nation? Has it been free during the whole of its history? Has it had to maintain a constant fight against invaders, or has it been itself an invader? What perplexing questions, intellectual, moral, social, has it been called upon to settle? In what great

movements or events has it participated? These things exert a powerful influence on the intellectual development of a people. It is this agency that divides the history of a literature into periods.

4. *Personality*. — The personality of the writers who produce a literature is not the least of the agencies that determine its character. The individuality, the “personal equation,” of the makers of masterpieces, is something that defies analysis, yet it is this that gives life to the writings of a nation. Without it the agencies of race, environment, and epoch would tend to produce an unvarying product. This element gives diversity to a literature.

**The Early History** of all literatures is much the same. The evolution from barbarism to civilization is always slow. The language, at first limited and barren, yet sufficient to voice all the needs and emotions of savage life, becomes more expressive. War brings contact with other nations; conquest adds foreign elements. At length the rude shoutings over war and victory become rhythmical, and literature begins. The first notes are always in verse, — rude and unmetrical, yet nevertheless verse, for childhood takes naturally to metres. The bloody song of Lamech to his wives, Gen. iv. 23, 24, is the first poem of which the world has a record. *Beowulf*, a terrible tale of war and carnage, is the first note in the grand chorus of English song.

**American Literature**. — The term *a literature* may be defined as “all the literary productions in a given language.”

By this definition English literature would embrace all the writings that have emanated from the race speaking the English language. The writings of America would, therefore, be only a branch drawing life from the great trunk of English letters. But this is not so. It is now generally admitted that the literature of America has become an independent one. It is an exception, and the only exception, to the rule given above. In no other case in all history have there been two distinct literatures written in the same language.

This conclusion has not been reached without discussion. It is acknowledged that our literature is still true to the great fundamental principles underlying English thought and institutions; that it had its birth and childhood in the land of Chaucer and of Spenser; that until the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century it was bound intellectually to England, and that it is using to-day the language of Wordsworth and Tennyson. But this does not prove that our literature is not now an independent one, for we have been for more than a century an independent nation; and we are recognized abroad not as Englishmen in America, but as a distinct type with as marked an individuality as have the English themselves. (See *Remarks on National Literature*, by W. E. Channing, 1823; also E. P. Whipple's *American Literature*, and Richardson, I., v-xx.

**The Beginnings of our Literature.** — To study American literature philosophically, one must go back to the



beginnings of the language in which it is written. A study of the literature and the intellectual development of England through the Elizabethan Age, should precede the thorough study of the American writers. This portion of English history is held in common by both nations. The elements of race and environment, as they affected our English ancestors, must be fully understood in order for us to appreciate the character and spirit of the founders of our nation. We must weigh the great events of British history and their influence upon the development of the English race. We must acquaint ourselves with the history and development of English thought and language; with the great minds that have shaped and moulded these from Cædmon to Chaucer and from Chaucer to Shakespeare. This done, we have mastered Book I. of the *History of American Thought and Literature*. It remains then to trace the intellectual evolution of a part of the English people under a new environment, amid new scenes of action.

**Epoch.** — (Tyler, 11-15.) Our literature made its first feeble beginnings in a most fortunate time, a time —

“When the firmament of English literature was all ablaze with the light of her full-orbed and most dazzling writers, the wits, the dramatists, scholars, orators, singers, philosophers, who formed that incomparable group of titanic men gathered in London during the earlier years of the seventeenth century.” — *Tyler*.

When Jamestown was settled in 1607, Spenser had been dead only eight years; Shakespeare was at the

height of his powers; Raleigh, a prisoner in the Tower of London, was engaged on his *History of the World*, and Bacon had just commenced his marvellous work, *The Novum Organum*. "The very air of London must have been electric with the daily words of these immortals," who made the Elizabethan Age the most glorious period since classic times. American literature was indeed fortunate in the time of its birth.

## II.

### THE FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD.

1607-1688.

**The Renaissance.** — The Fifteenth Century is the age of the Renaissance, — the awakening of literature, science, and art, from the long slumber of the Dark Ages. As the direct result of this emancipation of Europe, there came a period of great activity in almost every sphere of action.

The newly invented art of printing with movable types marked an era in the history of book-making; the invention of gunpowder completely revolutionized the science of war, while the mariner's compass marked a turning-point in the history of navigation. Everywhere was to be seen the activity of fresh intellectual life.

**Spirit of the Age.** — The Sixteenth Century is the age of discovery. Columbus, Cabot, Da Gama, Balboa, Magellan, made six world-revolutionizing discoveries in twenty-nine years. Cortez found a wonderland in Mexico; Pizarro opened up a new El Dorado in Peru; De Soto discov-

1340-1400. Geoffrey Chaucer, English poet.

1401. First execution for heresy.

1431. Joan of Arc burned.

1440. Printing from movable types made public by Gutenberg.

1453. Constantinople captured by the Turks.

1460-1471. Wars of the Roses.

1474. Caxton prints the first book in England.

1492. Discovery of the New World.

1497. Cabot discovers North America.

1517. Reformation in Germany.

1520. Magellan circumnavigates the globe.

1521. Cortez conquers Mexico.

1531. Pizarro subjugates Peru.

1541. De Soto discovers the Mississippi.

1552-1599. Edmund Spencer, English poet.

1552-1618. Sir Walter Raleigh, English historian and poet.

1554-1586. Sir Philip Sidney, poet and knight.

1558-1603. Reign of Elizabeth.

1561-1626. Francis Bacon, English philosopher.

1564-1616. Shakespeare, English poet.

1585. Raleigh's first Virginia colony.

1587. Raleigh's second colony.

1603-1625.

Reign of James I.

1608. Quebec founded by Champlain.

1608-1674. John Milton, English poet.

1609. Hudson discovers the Hudson River.

ered a mighty inland river which told of a vast extent of land to the northward, and soon the world was ready to believe almost any marvellous tale.

The new continent, with its strange vegetable and animal life, with its mystery and its wealth, appealed powerfully to the imagination of the masses. It was literally a new world that was opened to the eyes of Europeans, a world peopled by a race of beings as distinct and individual as if the only one ever created on the planet, the objects of the most intense curiosity in the Old World.

It was a century of feverish dreams of new empires, of gold, of conquest. The return of Pizarro from Peru with his shiploads of treasure set all Europe on fire. Spain, England, and France took the lead, and vied with each other in a mad scramble for the new continent.

**The Colonial Age.** — (Fisher's *Colonial Era*, Thwaite's *The Colonies*, 1492-1750.)

The Age of Discovery was succeeded in America by the *Colonial Age*. The spirit of maritime adventure and exploration which had grown into a passion during the early part of the Sixteenth Century began to subside as the new continent became better known, and the nations now sought to make good their claims to acquired territory by planting colonies.

America had a powerful influence in moulding the spirit of the age.

“Every great European event affected the fortunes of America. Did a state prosper, it sought an increase of wealth by plantations in the west. Was a sect persecuted, it escaped to the new world.” — *Bancroft*, Vol. II.

The Colonial Age may be divided into two distinct periods, — *The First Colonial Period*, which extends from 1607, the year of Jamestown settlement, to 1688, the year of the revolution which placed William and Mary on the English throne; and *The Second Colonial Period*, which opens with the date 1688 and ends in 1765, the year of the Stamp Act and the birth of the Revolutionary spirit in the colonies.

#### THE FIRST COLONIAL PERIOD (1607–1688).

(Fisher's *Colonial Era*; Bancroft, Vol. I.; Hildreth, Vol. I.; Lodge's *English Colonies in America*.) During the eighty-one years included in the first colonial period, thirteen colonies of widely differing characteristics, founded for thirteen different reasons, yet all of them of English stock in the end, were planted along the Atlantic coast of America.

The eighty years were filled with action. It was no easy task to subdue a raw continent. To establish homes in a savage wilderness subject to cruel winters; to hew down the forest; to clear the rocky, stump-strewn fields and fit them for cultivation; to be constantly in terror of wild beasts and savage men, — all of these things called for unrelenting physical toil, and

left little time to be devoted to the arts and graces of literature.

The whole period produced nothing of literary worth. A few writings, the offspring mainly of necessity, have come down to us, but they are valuable simply as curiosities or as documents for the historian. The period is to be studied not for its literary product, but for the light it throws on our later literary history.

**Virginia and Massachusetts.** — (Tyler, 83–85; Fiske, *Civil Government*, 16–19, 57–62; *Johns Hopkins University Studies*.) The two colonies of Virginia and Massachusetts are all that need be studied in an elementary history of American literature. They are the fountain heads of all that is strongest in our national and our literary history. Planted for widely different reasons, by men of almost opposite traits of character, and for more than a century having no intercourse at all with each other, they at length became the intellectual centres of our early national life. Lowell has called them “The two great distributing centres of the English race” in America. (See *Among My Books*, 1st series, 239.)

## 1. VIRGINIA.

“Britons, you stay too long;  
Quickly aboard bestow you;  
And with a merry gale  
Swell your stretch’d sail;  
With vows as strong  
As the winds that blow you.

. . . . .



And cheerfully at sea,  
Success you still entice :  
    To get the pearl and gold ;  
    And ours to hold ;  
Virginia  
Earth's only paradise."

So sang the grand old Elizabethan poet, Michael Drayton, when the three vessels that were fitting on the Thames for their memorable voyage were completing arrangements. England had made attempt after attempt during the reign of Elizabeth to establish colonies in her vast possessions in the west, but all of them had failed miserably. But in 1603 it was discovered that Virginia could be reached by sailing due west instead of taking the long dangerous route by way of the West Indies,—a discovery that created great excitement throughout England, and indeed throughout Europe. As a result, large numbers became eager to try their fortunes in the vast unknown El Dorado, now for the first time made accessible. The newly organized London Company soon sent out a fleet of three small ships, which, after being blown about by the winds of the Atlantic from April until December, were at last swept blindly and roughly by a fierce storm into the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. The building of the few rude huts which soon arose on the bank of the James was the most significant event that had happened in the new world since its discovery. It marked the opening of a new era in the history of North America.

**The Settlers of Virginia.** —(Cooke, 16-33; Neill's *His-*

*tory of the Virginia Company*, 1869; Stith's *Settlement of Virginia*, 1865.) It will be found important, as throwing light on our later literary development, to look carefully at these early emigrants who laid the foundation of Virginia. Of the one hundred and five men who composed the first expedition, nearly one-half were "gentlemen" with absolutely no experience in manual labor, and a large proportion of the remainder were soldiers and servants. They were of the Royalist party, and the Church of England. Many of them had squandered their ancestral estates and now sought America, led on by dreams of sudden conquest, and dazzling riches. Many were adventurers born of the protracted wars with Spain; some were worthless idlers, and even criminals fleeing from justice. Not one of them dreamed of a permanent home in the new land. They had had no falling out with the mother country; they had no desire to found a new order of society; they were without religious scruples or anything else, save a desire for speedy wealth—for gold that could be picked up in large nuggets without exertion.

Many of the later arrivals, drawn by the rich tobacco plantation, were from the higher classes, yet during the first half-century "the large proportion of the settlers in Virginia were of inferior quality, personally and socially," and many of them were "broken men, adventurers, bankrupts, criminals."

**The Physical Geography of Virginia** had much to do in shaping its history. It has a delightful climate, a soil of marvellous fertility; it is traversed by numerous

noble rivers, many of them navigable for a long distance from the sea, a fact that made it easy for plantations to rely upon supplies brought by vessels up the rivers, and that made the village grocery store, which was so prominent a feature in New England, a useless institution. The land was early found to be very favorable for the cultivation of tobacco, a crop which exhausts the soil more rapidly than almost any other. It was at first found more profitable to move to new fields after exhausting one plantation than to resort to the use of fertilizers, which accounts for the early scattering of the colonists over a wide area. Tobacco at once became the one crop of Virginia; it made manufacturing impossible. "Its influence," says one writer, "permeated the entire social sphere of the colony, directed its laws, and was an element in all its political and religious disturbances."

**Social Conditions.** — As a result of these combinations there arose a system of society which was peculiar to Virginia. The people did not settle in villages as in New England, but lived far distant from each other on large estates. "In Jamestown, the capital of the state, there were only eighteen houses." The owner of a large estate, grown rich from the cultivation of tobacco which he shipped, himself, to England, surrounded himself with laborers and slaves and lived in imitation of the owners of the English estates, a free and hospitable life, spending his leisure time in field sports and politics. Two classes of society were the result: the rich landowners, and the poor laborers and slaves. This condition of society made free schools impossible. During the whole

of the first Colonial period, "no mention is anywhere made in the records of schools, or any provision for the instruction of youth."

Another significant fact is that there was no permanent printing press in the colony until 1729. Education and literature were frowned upon. Sir William Berkeley, governor of Virginia from 1641 to 1677, in one of his reports remarked:

"I thank God there are no free schools nor printing; and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world and printing has divulged them and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."

It is needless to say that a society made up of such persons, and under such conditions, could not possibly be favorable to the cultivation of literature. Indeed, so unfavorable was it that, during the whole of her history Virginia has not produced a purely literary work of even the second rank. Many of the planters came from the ruling families of England, and from the discipline acquired from the managing of large estates they learned that mastery over men and events that made the state "the Mother of Presidents," of fiery orators and astute statesmen, but the conditions were far from conducive to literary life and effort.

**Early Writings in Virginia.**—The literature of the Colonial age in Virginia is so scanty and uninteresting as to deserve little attention. Much of it was written for purely practical ends with little thought of finish or literary beauty. Interspersed with this is the work of

a few English scholars who made a brief sojourn in the new land and then flitted back across the ocean. Of the principal writers of the first Colonial period, all except one, Alexander Whitaker, who had come "to bear the name of God to the heathen" of the New World, returned to England after a few years. The writings of the period may be roughly gathered into four groups:

1. *Letters* to friends in England. These, written often in haste, with no thought of literary finish, are full of observations on the strange scenes and surroundings into which the lives of their writers had fallen. They are of value now only so far as they throw light on the history, society, and spirit of the age that produced them.

2. *Descriptions* of the Indians, of the geography of the country, of the new flora and fauna, and of the history of the early days of the settlement. Smith's *A True Relation*, etc., and *A Map of Virginia*; and Whitaker's *Good News from Virginia*, are the best examples of this class of literature.

3. *Letters* legal, and reports to the Companies in England, as, for example, Smith's *Answers to the Seven Questions*, etc.

4. *Scholarly works* written by Englishmen of leisure sojourning for a time in America. These cannot be classed as American Literature any more than Irving's *Sketch Book* can be called an English book because it was written in England. Among such writings may be mentioned Sandys' translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

## CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH (1579-1631).

"The father of Virginia, the true leader who first planted the Saxon race within the borders of the United States." — *Bancroft*.

*A True Relation  
of Virginia.*

*Letter to the  
London Com-  
pany.*

*A Map of Vir-  
ginia.*

**Life** (by William Gilmore Simms; by G. S. Hillard, in Sparks' *American Biography*, Vol. II.; by C. D. Warner. See also Eggleston's *Pocahontas*, and Henry Adams' *Historical Essays*, 42. The chief

authorities on the life of Smith are his own autobiographical writings).

The romantic life of Captain John Smith is too well known to need retelling. His character, too, needs no new light shed upon it. We must acknowledge that he was inordinately vain, fond of boasting, impetuous, imperious, restless, yet we know that his shrewdness, his indomitable courage, and his sound judgment more than once saved the Virginia Colony from ruin. "It is not too much to say," writes an eminent English critic, "that had not Captain Smith strove, fought, and endured as he did, the present United States of America might never have come into existence. It was contrary to all probability that where so many had succumbed already, the Southern Virginia Company's expedition of 1606-7 should have succeeded."

Cooke, the historian of Virginia, writes of Smith:

"His endurance was unshrinking, and his life in Virginia indicated plainly that he had enormous recoil. He was probably never really cast down, and seems to have kept his heart of hope, without an effort in the darkest hours, when all around him despaired."



**Smith as a Writer.** — (Tyler, 16–38; Richardson, I., 63–72.) Of the nine works, with American themes, written by Smith, three were composed in Virginia. His first book, written during the thirteen months following the establishment of the colony, and published in London the next year, is doubly interesting, in that it is the first book produced on this continent, and that it tells in detail the story of those memorable months at Jamestown. Its full title is as follows :

*“A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of noate as hath happened in Virginia since the first planting of that Collony, which is now resident in the south part thereof, till the last return from thence. . . . Written by Captaine Smith, Coronell of said Collony, to a worshipfull friend of his in England. London 1608.”*

Smith's second work was a very spicy reply to the seven questions put by the London Company, to him as governor of Virginia. With this, Smith sent his third American work, entitled *A Map of Virginia*, etc., which, however, was not published until 1612.

## 2. MASSACHUSETTS.

**The Pilgrims.** — (Bradford and Winslow's *Journal*, and Bradford's *History of the Plymouth Plantation*; Palfrey's *History of New England*; Fiske's *Beginnings of New England*, 66–104; Doyle's *The Puritan Colonies*, Vol. II.; Young's *Chronicles of the Pilgrims*; Drake's *The Making of New England*; Bancroft, Vol. I., 194–214.) The small band of adventurers who sought Virginia in 1606, led on by dreams of “pearl and gold,” were swept along by a three days' storm and driven as by

the hand of fate into the noblest bay along the Atlantic coast, to a land of wonderful beauty and fruitfulness, at a time when all nature was robed in the freshness and beauty of the early springtime. What a contrast with the little group of Pilgrims who fourteen years later, wearied by persecution, exiles from their native land, without money or means to return across the sea even had they desired so to do, were landed on the savage coast of Massachusetts, at the very beginning of a cruel, northern winter. The Virginians had all been men, many of them inured to hardships by war and to lives of adventure, but here were women and little children,—whole families. Many were sick. For months it was a battle with cold, hunger, disease, hostile Indians, wild beasts; a battle for mere existence. Never was there a more unpromising venture as viewed from a practical standpoint; never was there a more discouraging outlook than from the huts of Plymouth during that memorable winter; yet never has there been a venture that has yielded grander results. *Dec. 20, 1620*, is the most significant date in our history.

REQUIRED READING.—Mrs. Hemans' "Landing of the Pilgrims;" Longfellow's "Courtship of Miles Standish." See also Mrs. Child's *Hobomok*; Mrs. Stowe's *The Mayflower*; Mrs. Austin's *Standish of Standish*, *Betty Alden*, *Dr. LeBaron and his Daughters*, and *A Nameless Nobleman*.

**Puritan Traits.** — (Greene's *Short History of the English People*, III., 19-35; Neale's *History of the Puritans*; Taine's *English Literature*, II., ch. v.; Tyler, 91-109; Richardson, I. 10-21.)

The settlers of Massachusetts differed from the early Virginians in almost every respect. They did not seek America for worldly gain; they were not adventurers cast up by the tide of chance, nor were they carried across the sea by a wave of popular enthusiasm. They were earnest and prayerful, prone to act only after mature deliberation, and they had come to America *to stay*.

As we study the history of the intellectual development of New England, it must be borne constantly in mind that her founders were deeply religious men. Religion was their vocation. They subordinated everything to this one great, ruling thought. Their convictions were intense and they obeyed them at any cost. Rather than use the book of Common Prayer and wear the robes prescribed for the clergy by the Church of England, they chose to leave all that society holds dear and take wife and child into the wilds across "the vast and furious ocean" where they might be free to worship God as they pleased.

After purchasing religious freedom at such a price, it is but natural that they should be intolerant of those who would pervert their belief, and we are not surprised to find them in turn persecutors. They fiercely assailed the Quakers; they drove Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson into the wilderness, and in Salem hanged nineteen persons suspected of being witches.

They viewed with alarm the increasing commercial spirit among the New England seaports. In 1663 we hear a venerable Salem clergyman sounding this note of warning :

“It concerneth New England always to remember that she was originally a plantation religious, not a plantation of trade. The profession of the purity of doctrine, worship and discipline is written upon her forehead. Let merchants and such as are increasing cent. per cent. remember this : that worldly gain was not the end and design of the people of New England, but religion. If any man among us make religion as twelve and the world as thirteen, such an one has not the spirit of a true New England man.”

Another characteristic of these men was their intense earnestness. They were never idle. Whatever they did, whether in religion, politics, education, or toil for daily bread, they did with their might. Life was a terrible reality. “I am resolved,” wrote Jonathan Edwards, “to live with all my might while I do live.” They had no time for earthly pleasures. Gayety and beauty, adornment of person or anything even approaching luxury were looked upon as things from Satan. Their lives were sad and cheerless. They disciplined themselves to think constantly on things pertaining to another world. Their God was a terrible being whose awful anger was easily kindled, and the sulphurous glare of the burning pit was kept constantly before the eyes of the careless.

If they became more gloomy and superstitious than the Puritans of England, the fact can be easily explained.

They were “surrounded by circumstances and pressed by griefs and anxieties, such as incline to sad and unhealthy meditation. . . .

An ocean divided them from the old seats of civilized life. Almost in the primitive nakedness of existence they were waging a contest with the awful elements. Their little settlements were isolated and unjoyous. The scene all around, — river, rock, covert, mountain, forest, — almost as wild and sombre as creation left it, invited to stern and melancholy musing.” — *Palfrey*.

Such were the founders of New England. For ten years after the first settlement, very few ventured to the new colony, but between 1630 and 1640 they came in multitudes. The opening of the Long Parliament during the latter year practically put an end to the Puritan exodus from England, but it has been estimated that there were then twenty-one thousand souls in the fifty towns of New England.

**The Physical Geography of New England** has greatly affected her development. When the Pilgrims first saw the region, it was covered with an almost unbroken forest. Its surface was rugged and strewn thick with bowlders, the relics of the Glacial Age. The great walls and heaps of stones about the cultivated fields tell of the task it has been to subdue and humanize it. Its rivers, with few exceptions, are not navigable. They come plunging down from the mountain sides, affording wonderful water-powers, the best in the world. Unlike Virginia, the country afforded few inducements to settlers. Large plantations were impossible; tobacco could not be grown with profit; agriculture was confined to the owners of small farms, — hillside fields wrested by sheer force from the domain of nature and little tracts along the rivers. These farms produced under severe toil enough to supply their owners with food. Manu-



facturing, for which the country is best adapted, was forbidden by England. During the Colonial period there were few exports save lumber, furs, and fish. The last item should not be overlooked, for so important a part did it play in the early history of Massachusetts that, to signify the source of her wealth, the figure of a codfish was hung in the State House in Boston. The rich fishing grounds off Cape Cod and the grand banks of Newfoundland were within easy reach. Whole townships and villages along the coast were devoted to this pursuit, the inhabitants leading a sort of dual life between the little farm at home and the sea. In later years the whale fishery became of great importance. The magnificent harbors all along the coast invited commerce. Shipbuilding grew to be a leading industry. Thus *New England* became, on account of its physical features like *old England*. Nature intended both for maritime enterprise and a manufacturing life. Both were to be sturdy intellectual centres from which was to emanate a wide-spread and dominating influence.

**Literary Conditions.** — (Tyler, 109–114; Richardson, I., ch. 2; Stedman, 11–26.) Among such men, in such an environment, literature was a natural product. All the conditions necessary for intellectual growth were early to be found. New England emphasized the things that Virginia neglected, and developed herself accordingly. Chief among the causes that made her, in time, a literary influence, were :

1. *A Centralized Society.* — The people settled in groups and not, as in Virginia, on isolated plantations.



This was brought about largely by that religious devotion that forbade families settling far from the church. Previous to 1640 many entire congregations under the leadership of their pastors came from England and established little villages, the germs of future cities. There were other reasons for centralization. It was unsafe to live far from the "block house," the common refuge in times of danger from Indians. Supplies must be obtained, not as in Virginia from boats plying upon the rivers, but from centres of trade. Thus in New England the town became in time the political unit; as the county became the unit in Virginia. Everything tended to bring men into close contact.

Schools and colleges and literary culture flourish best in towns and cities where there is a constant interchange of experiences, of books, of letters and ideas.

2. *Education*.—It was a belief of the fathers of New England that "one chief project of that old deluder, Satan," is to keep men in ignorance. They, therefore, regarded the educating of their children as a solemn religious duty.

The settlers were mostly from the common walks of life, — craftsmen and farmers, — but their leaders and ministers were deeply learned men. The percentage of those in New England who were college bred was even larger than it is at the present time. In the little colony of Massachusetts Bay there were ninety graduates of Cambridge and of Oxford. With such men for leaders education could

1636. Harvard.

1693. College of William and Mary.

1700. Yale.

1746. College of New Jersey.

1754. King's College (now Columbia).

1755. University of Pennsylvania.

1764. Brown University.

1769. Dartmouth.

1770. Rutgers.

1775. Hampden-Sidney.

not languish. The school house came to be considered second only to the church in importance.

Fearing that the plantations would become, as Mather expressed it, "mere unwatered places for the devil," unless they had a university, the settlers in 1636 established a college. Four hundred pounds in money was at first pledged. Two years later, by the will of John Harvard, a young Charleston minister, the little college received seven or eight hundred pounds and, for those times, a large library. It is somewhat startling to think that this was only sixteen years after the Pilgrims first landed on the desolate shores of New England. Yale College came sixty-five years later. In their enthusiasm for education the colonists even tried to apply the classics to the Indian, founding Dartmouth College for that purpose in 1769.

The common school system was early established. Every town of fifty families was compelled by law to maintain a public school, and every town of one hundred families must have a school to fit pupils for Harvard College.

The Pilgrims builded better than they knew. The educational system, thus inaugurated, has become the foundation that underlies all the intellectual product of America.

3. *The church* was in itself an educational factor that must not be overlooked. An educated clergy, and a public sentiment that compelled every one to be a

constant attendant upon the Sabbath services, were great incentives to intellectual activity. The sermons of the time were deep and carefully elaborated. Dealing with argumentative and doctrinal themes, they dragged their inexorable length through two and even three hours. Often the preacher gave a series of sermons on some particular topic, carefully impressing it, point by point, upon his hearers after the manner of a professor of divinity in a college. The people listened eagerly. Mather, in his life of the Elder Winthrop, records that "such was his attention and such his retention in hearing, that he repeated unto his family the sermons which he had heard in the congregation." Those with less trusty memories came to church with note books, and gathered, like a class in divinity, the important points brought out by the preacher.

The age was an argumentative one. Fierce theological battles were waging on all sides. The men of New England had taken a bold and radical step before the eyes of the world, and they held themselves ready to defend their creed with all the logic and argument at their command. Under such church discipline they gained the weapons most needed. Thus were cultivated those powers of attention, of close and consecutive reasoning, which in after years reached their fullest development in Edwards and Franklin.

Metaphysics and theological argument are not literature, yet they gave to the builders of New England an intellectuality that soon made possible purely literary work.

**Unfavorable Influences.** — It must not be inferred that everything done by the Pilgrims was destined to bear rich fruit. Many influences were at work decidedly hostile to literary production, and, indeed, to any degree of symmetrical intellectual development, but fortunately the good outweighed the bad. Among these unfavorable influences only three need be mentioned.

1. *Puritan Narrowness.* — Hawthorne has admirably summed up this influence.

Life in the Puritan settlements "must have trudged onward with hardly anything to diversify and enliven it, while also its rigidity could not fail to cause miserable distortions of the moral nature. Such a life was sinister to the intellect and sinister to the heart; especially when one generation had bequeathed its religious gloom, and the counterfeit of its religious ardor, to the next. . . . The sons and grandchildren of the first settlers were a race of lower and narrower souls than their progenitors had been. The latter were stern, severe, intolerant, but not superstitious, not even fanatical; and endowed, if any men of that age were, with a far-seeing worldly sagacity. But it was impossible for the succeeding race to grow up, in heaven's freedom, beneath the discipline which their gloomy energy of character had established; nor, it may be, have we even yet thrown off all the unfavorable influences which, among many good ones, were bequeathed to us by our Puritan forefathers." — *The Snow Image*, "Main Street."

2. *Lack of Æsthetic Taste.* — Beauty, whether in art, literature, or external surroundings, was looked upon with suspicion. The romance and the drama were condemned as vanities; poetry, aside from hymns and religious jingles, was a mere waste of words; sculpture and painting were regarded with horror as a direct violation of the Second Commandment; while the desire for orna-

ment, either in architecture or dress, was supposed to come directly from the devil.

3. *Licensed Printing.* — The Puritans regarded the press much as did old Governor Berkeley of Virginia. Their terror of its power to mould the public mind is half ludicrous as we view it to-day. In 1639, a press was set up in Cambridge to be watched over by the Argus eyes of the university authorities. But these guardians of the awful engine became at length too liberal, and a board of licensers was appointed to take their place. The result of this restriction upon printing was an inevitable one. The first feeble attempt at a newspaper, in 1690, died at its birth. For more than a century journalism lived as it could; historical writings were confined to a few dry journals; poetry worthy of the name was unknown. Little save sermons and controversial pamphlets issued from the press. It has been found that between the years 1706 and 1718 five hundred and fifty publications were printed in America; "of these all but eighty-four were on religious topics, and of the eighty-four, forty-nine were almanacs."

**The Bay Psalm Book.** — (Cambridge, 1640.)

"The worst of many bad." — *John Nichol.*

This curious old work holds the somewhat enviable distinction of being the first book printed in America. It was the joint production of several eminent divines prominent among whom were "the apostle" Eliot and Richard Mather. The compilers put all of their tremendous energy and will power into the task of turn-

ing the Psalms of David into metrical form for church use, and the result was one of the most marvellous productions ever written in English. It need not be said to one who has read even a fragment from this book that the men of early New England were anything but poetical. "Everywhere in the book," writes Tyler, "is manifest the agony it cost the writers to find two words that would rhyme, — more or less." A brief extract will characterize it better than a page of description.

## PSALM CXXXVII.

"The rivers on of Babilon,  
there when wee did sit downe,  
Yea, even then wee mourned when  
we remembered Sion.

"Our harp wee did hang it amid  
upon the willow tree,  
because there they that us away  
led into captivitee,

"Required of us a song, and thus  
askt mirth as waste who laid,  
Sing us among a Sion song,  
unto us then they said.

"The Lord's song sing, can wee, being  
in stranger's land? then let  
lose her skill my right hand if I  
Jerusalem forget."

**The Literature of the Period** falls naturally into three groups: Journals and Historical Works, Religious and Theological Writings, and Poetry.



## I. HISTORICAL WORKS.

From the very first, the Pilgrims seem to have been conscious of their high destiny. They never for a moment doubted that they were the pioneers of a new era, and they realized that in future years their every act would be regarded with great interest. They therefore determined that posterity should have a truthful report of all their acts and motives.

## 1. WILLIAM BRADFORD (1588-1657).

“The Father of American History.”

No writer of contemporary history was ever more favored by circumstances than was William Bradford, the historian of Plymouth, since the greater part of the stirring scenes of which he wrote passed under his own eye. Born in Yorkshire, in 1588, he became, while yet a boy, a member of the little company of Puritans that, under the lead of their pastor, Robinson, fled to Holland. At the age of thirty-two, he was among the passengers on the *Mayflower*. From 1621 until his death, he was governor of Plymouth Plantation.

*History of Plymouth Plantation.*

*Journal* (with Winslow).

Bradford's history is, in reality, a journal kept with extreme care. Commencing at the root of the matter, it gives a careful account of the origin of the religious dissensions in England from which the Puritan sect arose; it records the persecutions and sufferings of the

various congregations; the flight of the little flock to Holland and thence to America, and the daily life of those first eventful years. The narrative continues down to the year 1646. It is accurate and readable, and it is almost the only authority for the period which it covers.

The manuscript has had a romantic history. It was not published, and at the death of its author it passed from hand to hand, many of the historians of the time making large extracts from it, until at length it found its way into the archives of the old South Church of Boston. After the British occupation of this church during the Revolution, it disappeared, and for almost a century it was mourned as lost. But in 1855, it was found in the library of the Bishop of London and published entire by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

REQUIRED READING.—Extracts from Bradford's History. Maynard, Merrill & Co.

## 2. JOHN WINTHROP (1588-1646).

**Life** (by Robert C. Winthrop; by Joseph H. Twitchell).—As Bradford is the historian of the Plymouth Colony, so Winthrop is the chronicler of Massachusetts Bay. He was the first governor of the Plantation, and from 1643 until his death he was governor of the united Colonies of Massachusetts.

*History of New  
England.*  
1630-1646.

The first entries in Winthrop's journal were made on shipboard during the long two months' voyage to New

England in 1630, and the entries were continued from time to time until their author's death.

These journals, by the most prominent men in the two colonies, naturally invite comparison. Bradford's work is without doubt the better of the two. It is readable, and its literary style is excellent. Winthrop's history is dull and often unreadable. It has more historical value than Bradford's, simply because the Colony of Massachusetts Bay became of more importance than the Plymouth Plantation. Winthrop delights in recording miracles, apparitions, and monstrosities. He dwells on the darker side of Puritanism, while Bradford constantly aims to display its brighter phases.

Winthrop's history has proved a rich mine for later writers. Hawthorne probably conceived of his *Scarlet Letter* while perusing its pages. He found in it the story of "Endicott and the Red Cross," and "The Maypole of Merry Mount." Whittier's "John Underhill" and many of Longfellow's *New England Tragedies* were founded on facts obtained from this old diary.

REQUIRED READING. — Whittier's "John Underhill"; Hawthorne's "Endicott and the Red Cross."

### 3. THOMAS MORTON (1590-1646).

"The roistering Morton of Merry Mount." — Longfellow, "Rhyme of Sir Christopher."

Just five years after the planting of the Plymouth Colony there settled at Mount Wollaston, now Braintree, Massachusetts, one Thomas Morton, with a boisterous crew of merry fellows who on May day, 1626,

christened the hill "Merry Mount" and held high carnival about a May-pole. The settlement soon became very offensive to its Puritan neighbors, and shortly afterward the pole was cut down by Miles Standish and his men, and Morton was sent to England. Attempting to return, he was again sent back.

Morton avenged his wrongs by writing, in England, *The New England Canaan*, a coarse and boisterous book, ridiculing the Puritan faith and manners. Its facts are not trustworthy, and its descriptions are grossly exaggerated. Upon the author's return to New England he was imprisoned one year for this offence. Hawthorne's *May Pole of Merry Mount* and Motley's *Merry Mount* are founded on incidents in Morton's career.

Thomas Morton of "Merry Mount" should not be confounded with Nathaniel Morton of Plymouth Colony, who published in 1669 *New England's Memorial*, a history of the colony from 1620 to 1646, copied largely from the history of his uncle, William Bradford, and from Winslow's *Journal*.

## II. THEOLOGICAL WORKS.

The various theological factions that fought so fiercely throughout the Colonial era, poured into each other's ranks a leaden hail of pamphlets. The few surviving relics of these battles, with quaint, long titles, and dry-as-dust contents, are valuable now only to the historian and the antiquarian.

## 1. ROGER WILLIAMS (1606-1683).

“An able, earnest, and successful pioneer in that great movement toward religious freedom which has characterized the history of the United States. . . . No American ever wrote more boldly or truthfully.” — *Richardson*.

**Life** (by J. O. Knowles; by Romeo Elton; by Z. A. Mudge; by R. A. Gould). Although the Puritans had dreamed of America as a land where they might worship without opposition, they never fully realized this fond ideal. Opponents sprang up all around them. The Quakers and the Baptists gave them no end of trouble. In 1630 Roger Williams, a minister of the Church of England, just turned non-conformist, settled among them and began a bitter war of argument. He was finally driven from the Colony. Thereupon with a few followers he established a settlement near what is now the city of Providence, Rhode Island.

*The Bloody Tenet yet more Bloody*, and numerous other pamphlets.

The whole life of Roger Williams was spent in a warfare of theological debate. He defended the Baptists and the Quakers, exposed without mercy the weak points of Puritanism, and stood always on the side of truth and progress. He defended his every position with showers of pamphlets.

## 2. JOHN ELIOT (1604-1690).

“The Apostle to the Indians.”

Although producing little that can be accounted as literature, John Eliot deserves prominent mention in

*Translation of  
the Bible into  
the Indian  
Tongue* 1661-3.  
*Psalms in In-  
dian metre.*  
*Bay Psalm  
Book. Pam-  
phlets.*

the history of American letters. He seems to have been the only one of his generation who realized that the Indian possessed an immortal soul. He devoted his life to the task of winning these souls for Christ.

Not only did he learn the Indian tongue, but he translated the entire Bible into the language. The task was a herculean one.

"To learn a language utterly unlike all other tongues, . . . a language never written, and the strange words which seemed inexpressible by letters, — first to learn this new variety of speech, and then to translate the Bible into it, and to do it so carefully that not one idea throughout the holy book should be changed, — this was what the Apostle Eliot did." — *Grandfather's Chair*.

Eliot's Bible is now the most valuable relic of a vanished race. Aside from its great interest to the ethnologist and the antiquarian, it has the added interest of being the first Bible printed in America. Copies of it are exceedingly rare and costly.

REQUIRED READING. — Hawthorne's *Grandfather's Chair*, Part I., Ch. 8. Eliot's *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel among the Indians*. 1670. Old South Leaflets.

### III. POETRY.

A glance at the old Bay Psalm Book is enough to convince any one that the Puritan age was anything but a poetical one. Nevertheless we find among the early colonists many writers of verse, at least two of which were proudly classed by their contemporaries among the great poets of all time. Only these two need be considered here.



## 1. ANNE (DUDLEY) BRADSTREET (1612-1672).

“The Morning Star of American Poetry.”

Since the days of Sappho no poetess was ever more extravagantly praised by contemporaries than was Anne Bradstreet, the “Tenth Muse” of the Puritans of early New England. The daughter of Governor Thomas Dudley, she had accompanied her stern old father into the forests of Massachusetts Bay with the earliest settlers of that province. It was her happy lot to strike the first note in the grand chorus of American poetry.

*The Tenth  
Muse, etc.  
Contem-  
pla-  
tions.*

In 1650 there appeared in London, with the following long-winded title, the first book of American verse ever printed abroad:

*“The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America; or, General Poems, compiled with a great variety of wit and learning, full of delight; wherein especially is contained a complete discourse and description of the four elements, constitutions, ages of man, seasons of the year; together with an exact epitome of the four Monarchies, viz., the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman; also a dialogue between old England and New concerning the late troubles; with divers other pleasant and serious poems. By a gentlewoman in those parts.”*

With such subjects did Anne Bradstreet woo the Muses, and her poem is just what we might expect from its title. Her numbers were seldom correct; she lacked the fine touch of the true poet, and her themes were such that not even genius could lift them into the realm of poesy, yet in spite of all this she deserves much praise, since hers was the hand that first beckoned the lyric muse to these shores.

Among a surprising mass of rubbish from her pen there is here and there to be found a true gem. In her *Contemplations*, written apparently on the banks of the Merrimac at the flood tide of the year, we find the first poetry of the American landscape :

“ Sometime now past in the Autumnal tide,  
 When Phœbus wanted but one hour to bed,  
 The trees all nicely clad, yet void of pride,  
 Were gilded o’er by his rich golden head.  
 Their leaves and fruits seem’d painted, but was true  
 Of green, of red, of yellow, mixed hew :  
 Rapt were my senses at this delectable view.”

The surroundings of this early poetess were anything but inspiring. She was lame and of delicate health throughout her life. The mother of eight children, she wrote all her poems amid the hurry and care of multifarious household duties.

From Anne Bradstreet has descended a sturdy literary progeny. Holmes, Channing, R. H. Dana, Buckminster, and many other New England authors trace a lineal descent from this earliest singer of the new world.

## 2. MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH (1631-1715).

“ The Laureate of Puritanism.”

None can fully appreciate the theology of early New England who has not read the remarkable poem, *The Day of Doom*, — that blazing, sulphurous picture of the punishment of the wicked according to the ideals of Puritanism.

*God's Controversy with New England.*

*Meat out of the Eater.*

*The Day of Doom.*

Its author, Michael Wigglesworth, in the words of Mather, “ a little feeble shadow

of a man," had come with his parents to America in his seventh year, and after a course at Harvard, had settled over a church at Malden, Massachusetts, where he at once commenced a most remarkable career as a poet. His *Day of Doom, or a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment, with a Short Discourse about Eternity*, appearing in 1662, quickly went through nine editions in America and two in England. It became, in the words of Lowell, "the solace of every fireside, the flicker of the pine-knots by which it was conned perhaps adding a livelier relish to its premonitions of eternal combustion."

Judged by the cold standards of to-day the book has little poetic merit. The sing-song of the verse, that so captivated its first readers, serves to create only a passing smile, while we shudder at the narrow theology that could exult over burning infants and gloat over the moans of tortured sinners. A short extract will illustrate its metre and spirit.

"Then might you hear them rend and tear  
The air with their outcries;  
'The hideous noise of their sad voice  
Ascendent to the skies.  
They wring their hands, their caitiff hands,  
And gnash their teeth for terror;  
They cry, they roar, for anguish sore,  
And gnaw their tongue for horror.  
But get away without delay;  
Christ pities not your cry;  
Depart to hell, there may you yell  
And roar eternally."

### III.

#### THE SECOND COLONIAL PERIOD.

1688-1765.

1607. Virginia settled at Jamestown.

1620. Massachusetts settled at Plymouth.

1623. New Hampshire settled at Dover.

1623. New York settled by the Dutch.

1631. Maryland settled by Clayborne.

1634. Connecticut settled.

1636. Rhode Island settled by Roger Williams.

1638. Delaware settled by Swedes and Finns.

1663-5. The Carolinas settled.

1664. New Jersey settled by English and Swedes.

1681. Pennsylvania settled by William Penn.

1729. The Carolinas divided.

1733. Georgia settled by Oglethorpe.

**Colonial Isolation.**— One of the most striking things in our Colonial history is the remarkable isolation of the Colonies, in reference to each other, all through the Colonial Age. Although kindred in blood, speaking the same language and acknowledging the same sovereign, each Colony was in reality a little nation by itself, with its own peculiar laws, moneys, military plans, and social usages.

At the end of the first period the Colonies were in three distinct groups:

1. *The New England Group.*— Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire.

2. *The Middle Group.*— New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania.

3. *The Southern Group.*— Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Between the members of each group there was more or less intercourse, but between the groups there was almost none at all.

**Loyalty to England.** — Although the immigrant generation passed from the field of action, and affairs came into the hands of those who called themselves “Englishmen” and yet had never been in England, loyalty to the mother land did not abate. Notwithstanding their isolation in regard to one another, all the Colonies were intensely true to what they called their “home across the sea.” Even the New Englanders who had quarrelled with England to a degree that they could leave her forever, were proud to call themselves Englishmen, and regarded *New* England simply as a part of the *old* England which they had left. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the colonists did not dream of independence until the very close of the Colonial Age. They could complain of harsh treatment, and even resist a tyrannical governor, as did Bacon in Virginia in 1676, but they no more thought of independence from Great Britain than did the citizens of London. Franklin, as late as 1775, told Lord Chatham that in all his intercourse with all sorts of people in the Colonies he had never heard a desire to separate from England expressed. The negligence of Great Britain forced the Colonies to unite, and her injustice forced them to independence.

**The Second Colonial Period.** — The Revolution of 1688, which forced the intolerant James II. to flee to France, and placed the protestant monarchs, William and Mary, on the English throne, marks the end of the First Colonial Period. There was no change in the tone of the literary product

1642-1727.

Isaac Newton.

1661-1731.

Daniel DeFoe.

1667-1745.

Jonathan Swift.

1672-1719.

Joseph Addison.

1672-1729.

Richard Steele.

1689-1761.  
Samuel Richardson.

1707-1754.  
Henry Fielding.

1728-1774.  
Oliver Goldsmith.

1737-1794.  
Edward Gibbon.

1719. Publication  
of *Robinson Crusoe*.

1740. Publication  
of *Pamela*,  
the first English  
Novel.

to show that a new period had opened; indeed, the writings during the entire Colonial Age are of singular uniformity. The period stands rather for the birth of a new idea, one of wonderful meaning, on which our national and our literary history depends, — the idea of *Union*.

Scarcely three months from the time of his coronation, William declared war against Louis XIV. of France, who was then meditating on a splendid course of conquest which aimed at nothing less than universal domain.

The war known in history as King William's War was the American echo of the conflict that followed.

**New France or New England.** — (Parkman's *France and England in North America*.) During the preceding period the French had left the English to hold the Atlantic coast, and had pushed up the St. Lawrence, through the Great Lakes and down the Mississippi, until, under the names of Louisiana and New York, they laid claim to fully one-half of the present territory of the United States. No sooner had war been declared than the English Colonies awoke to a realization that they were completely surrounded on the north and west by the French. Immediately the armies of New France began to press upon the English frontiers. It became evident that it was the ambition of France "to grasp the entire continent."

The Second Colonial Period witnessed a desperate and bloody struggle between England and France for



North America. Its outcome was of vast importance. Had France won, it would have changed the destiny of the new world. War followed war. Queen Anne's War, King George's War, and the final and decisive French and Indian War came rapidly one after the other.

The lack of union among the thirteen Colonies and the long unprotected border gave the French a great advantage. As these wars were but the echoes of European struggles, England had all that she could manage at home. The Colonies soon found that they could not rely upon the mother country, that they must fight for themselves, whatever were the odds against them, or be pushed into the Atlantic.

REQUIRED READING. — "The Story of the French and English Wars," in Parkman's *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, I. 95-141.

**Union.** — Here was born the first real idea of union, — union against France. It was born of the neglect of England for her American offspring, it was nourished by the foolish continental wars which she indulged in, wars which in America, at least, were without results or glory.

In 1690, delegates from Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New York had met in New York to concert measures against the French, and this had been the beginning of many similar conventions. The

1692. Witchcraft delusion at Salem.

1689-1697. King William's War.

1702-1713. Queen Anne's War.

1739. War between England and Spain.

1744-1748. King George's War.

1752. The "New Style" adopted in the British dominions, Sept. 3 being called Sept. 14.

1755. Braddock's defeat.

1755. Lisbon earthquake.

1757. Lord Clive wins India for England.

1763. End of the French and Indian War.

1763. The Conspiracy of Pontiac.

tenacity of local ideas and aims, that had tended to keep the Colonies apart, vanished before a common danger. Although the Union was at first only a frail affair, not involving all the Colonies, and having no reference to anything but temporary results, it was significant.

England had gratified her vanity by waging her wars with France and Spain, but she had unconsciously taught her Colonies two great secrets, — first, the strength of union, and second, the sturdy self-reliance which afterwards won for them their independence.

**A Transition Period.** — The eighty-seven years of the Second Colonial Period witnessed great changes in the life and spirit of the Colonies. Old ideals were breaking down on every hand. The clergy began gradually to lose their supreme power in intellectual affairs. The laymen were turning their minds to their worldly surroundings, and were fast losing the intense religious absorption of earlier days. Commerce began to flourish; the cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia became busy centres of trade; the shipping industry grew with wonderful vigor. The Colonial wars and the politics of the times, the struggles with charters and arbitrary governors, had all tended to turn the minds of the colonists from their souls to their bodies and their surroundings. Superstition was dying a natural death. Dr. Boylston successfully inoculated for small-pox in Boston, thus robbing this dread disease of much of its terrors. The witchcraft delusion, “that last spasm of expiring Puritanism,” did much to do away with the

belief in miracles and mysteries. On all sides the mists of prejudice and intolerance were clearing away, and the east was red with the dawning of a new morning.

The Newspaper was an important agent in the intellectual emancipation of the Colonies. The first attempt at journalism was made in 1690, when a little publication, more a pamphlet than a newspaper, was issued in Boston under the name *Public Occurrences*. This was intended to be issued monthly, but it was quickly suppressed by the General Court. *The Boston News-Letter* followed in 1704, and in 1719 came the *Boston Gazette*, printed, though not edited, by James Franklin, the brother of Benjamin Franklin. *The American Weekly Mercury*, of Philadelphia, was established one day later. *The New England Courant*, famous from its connection with the early career of Benjamin Franklin, followed next in order, in 1721. It was edited as well as printed by James Franklin. "I remember," says the *Autobiography*, "his being dissuaded by some of his friends from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being, in their judgment, enough for America." Nevertheless, newspapers multiplied rapidly, until at the close of the period there were in all the Colonies at least forty. In 1741, Franklin established in Philadelphia *The General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for All the British Provinces in America*. Although published only six months, and containing little of literary value, this paper

1663. First English newspaper.

1711-1714. Addison's *Spectator* (London).

1690. *Public Occurrences*.

1704. *The Boston News-Letter*.

1719. *Boston Gazette*.

1719. *American Weekly Mercury*.

1725. First newspaper in New York.

is of interest, since it was the first attempt in America to found a literary magazine.

**The Literature of the Period** does not much differ from that produced during the first era. It was still prevalently religious in its character. The poetry clumsily followed the artificial models of the school of Pope and was for the most part unnatural and worthless. The period, however, produced three writers of high rank, — Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, and Benjamin Franklin, the last two attaining to international renown. These, with Samuel Sewall and Governor Hutchinson, are all that need be mentioned in a brief history of the period.

### 1. SAMUEL SEWALL (1662–1730).

“The Puritan Pepys.”

The work done by Bradford and Winthrop during the early days of New England was continued by Samuel Sewall, who kept a faithful journal between the years 1673 and 1739. Sewall was born in England, coming with his father to America while yet a boy, and after a course at Harvard, settled down to the law. He married the daughter of John Hull, the rich mint master of Massachusetts, who gave him a fortune. In time he became the Chief Justice of Massachusetts. During the witchcraft trials at Salem, he was a conspicuous figure among the judges, but, becoming convinced of his error later in life, he did what he could to atone for his part in the miserable affair by making a public confession in church.

*The Selling of  
Joseph.  
Diary,  
1673–1739.*

Sewall's diary, which is now in the hands of the Massachusetts Historical Association, is a minute record of the domestic and public life of its author and contains much valuable historical matter. It covers the period of the Quaker persecutions, King Philip's War, and the English Revolution of 1688.

Justice Sewall was a strong writer on many topics. He was one of the first to protest against African slavery. His little tract, *The Selling of Joseph*, a powerful and impassioned plea against this evil, is still readable.

REQUIRED READING. — Whittier's "Prophecy of Samuel Sewall"; Hawthorne's "The Pine Tree Shillings," in *Grandfather's Chair*, i. ch. 6. See also "A Puritan Pepys," with extracts from the diary, in Lodge's *Studies in History*, p. 21.

## 2. COTTON MATHER (1663-1728).

"In him the Puritan Age culminated and came to an end." — *Greenough White*.

Life (by his son Samuel, 1729, by W. B. O. Peabody in Sparks' *American Biography*; by A. P. Marvin; by Barrett Wendell, 1891). For four generations the Mather family was prominent in the intellectual history of New England. Richard Mather, its founder, had left his church in England rather than wear a surplice; had migrated to the new world, and had left as his monument his work on the old *Bay Psalm Book*. But the star of the Mather family was

*Memorable  
Providences.  
Wonders of the  
Invisible World.  
Essays to do  
Good.  
Magnalia  
Christi  
Americana.*

to increase in brilliancy with each generation. An old epitaph records that

“Under this stone lies Richard Mather,  
Who had a son greater than his father,  
And eke a grandson greater than either.”

The son was Increase Mather, renowned for learning and eloquence, president of Harvard College from 1685 to 1701, pastor of the old North Church until his death; while the grandson, the crowning glory of all, was Cotton Mather, “the literary behemoth of New England in our Colonial Era.” No man was ever more fortunate in his ancestry. His maternal grandfather was the famous Boston divine, John Cotton. From his ancestors on both sides he inherited all the earnestness and obstinacy, all the fine intellect as well as the superstition and gloom of the early Puritans. He was the quintessence of Puritanism.

The stories of Cotton Mather’s wonderful precocity sound strangely unreal in these days. He seems never to have had a childhood. Hebrew and Greek and Latin early became to him as his mother tongue. At fifteen he had received his degree at Harvard College with the highest possible honors of the institution, and at twenty-two he was his father’s assistant in the old North Church, succeeding him in due time as pastor.

**The Witchcraft Delusion.**—Mather’s life was one of ceaseless activity. “To preach seventy sermons in public,” observes one writer, “forty more in private, keep thirty vigils and sixty fasts, and still have time for persecuting witches, was nothing unusual for him



to do in a year." As a voluminous pamphleteer he has had few equals, his published works numbering nearly four hundred. He is, perhaps, most widely known from his connection with the Salem witchcraft delusion of 1692. To Cotton Mather evil spirits and "unlovely demons" in the shape of men and women were as real as were the facts of his daily life. His *Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft*, written apparently with perfect honesty and published in 1789, served as a fan for the fire smouldering in Salem. Four years later, when men like Justice Sewall were bitterly repenting of their part in the terrible tragedy, Mather published his *Wonders of the Invisible World*, a cold-blooded account of the trials and executions at Salem, every word pregnant with the belief that devils and not human beings had been dealt with. That he was intensely honest in all this need not be said. His terrible convictions triumphing over his naturally kind heart would not have allowed him to hesitate even had the evidence involved his son Samuel.

**The Magnalia.**—(Richardson, I. 131–137, with extract.) In 1702 Mather's *magnum opus*, the ponderous *Magnalia Christi Americana*, was printed in London. "It is a strange, pedantic history," says Hawthorne, "in which true events and real personages move before the reader with the dreamy aspect which they wore in Cotton Mather's singular mind." The text fairly groans with quotations and citations from every known and unknown tongue, with allusions to quaint and forgotten history dragged in by force to display the author's amazing erudition.

Mather intended this work to be the complete and final history of his time. He failed simply because he lacked the indispensable qualifications of the historian. He was intensely prejudiced. His horizon, in spite of his education, was a narrow one. Notwithstanding his wonderful opportunity in a time when he might have verified his every statement by documents and sources of history now lost forever, he must be read with suspicion. Rather than tell the simple tale of his times he preferred to display his classical verbiage and lose himself in a chaos of visions. The *Magnalia*, however, is not wholly without value. "There are in it lodged many single facts of the utmost value, personal reminiscences, social gossip, snatches of conversation, touches of description, traits of character and life that can be found nowhere else." — *Tyler*.

One little book of Mather's should not be overlooked. Franklin, in a letter to Samuel Mather, once declared that the little volume, *Essays to do Good*, had been one of the strongest influences for good that had ever affected his life.

REQUIRED READING. — Hawthorne's *Grandfather's Chair*, ii. chs. 4 and 5. Whittier's "Garrison of Cape Ann." Longfellow's "The Phantom Ship."

### 3. JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703-1758).

"The most eminent of American metaphysicians." — *Richardson*.

The representative character of the Second Colonial Period, and by all means the most conspicuous figure in our early intellectual history, was Jonathan Edwards.

In a transition period he stood in a curious way between the new and the old. He clung fast to the old Puritan ideas of original sin, of predestination and the terrors of punishment at the hands of an angry God. His awful idea of God can be shown in a brief quotation.

*A Treatise on  
the Religious  
Affections.*

*An Inquiry into  
the Freedom of  
the Will.*

“The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked. . . . If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case that he will only tread you under foot. . . . He will crush out your blood and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on all his garments so as to stain all his raiment.” — *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.

And yet, Edwards was exceedingly sensitive and susceptible to new ideas. In an unscientific age he was an eager student of the laws of nature. He sought earnestly for the light wherever it might lead him. In his metaphysical work so far was he ahead of his age that his writings are regarded as authorities in modern times. His searching mind and catholic soul were ever ready to recognize truth, no matter what havoc it might play with preconceived notions.

**Life** (by Samuel Hopkins; by Sereno Edwards Dwight; by A. V. G. Allen). Edwards was born at East Winsor, Connecticut, in 1703. While a mere youth, he delighted in philosophy, writing, at the age of thirteen, profound letters concerning the nature of the soul, and the exposition of the theology of Calvin.

While a sophomore at Yale College, he chanced upon a copy of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*.

He tells us that he read this with a greater delight "than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly disclosed treasure." This eager thirst for knowledge never left him. He trained himself to read, pen in hand, equaling in energy and steadfast purpose the studious Cotton Mather of an earlier generation. Graduating at Yale in 1720, he was for a short time a tutor in the college, soon afterwards becoming a pastor, first in the church at Northampton, Massachusetts, and then among the Stockbridge Indians. Three months before his death he became president of Princeton College.

Although, like most of the clergymen of his day, Edwards was a voluminous writer, his works belong to theology and metaphysics rather than to literature. However, "there is an intensity," notes Professor Beers, "and a spiritual elevation about them, apart from the profundity and acuteness of the thought, which lift them here and there into the finer ether of purely emotional or imaginative art."

**The Freedom of the Will.** — Although Edwards published thirty-six different books, his fame chiefly depends upon one master work bearing the formidable title :

*"A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Notion of that Freedom of Will which is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame."*

This learned metaphysical discussion supports the doctrine laid down by Calvin, that the will is not self-determined and free, that man does not act by virtue of a free choice, but in accordance with the will of a

supreme ruling power. The book is as abstruse to the average reader as a treatise on the higher mathematics. It has furnished a field for much argument from the time of its first appearance until the present. Some of the profoundest metaphysicians of the century have assailed it, but it seems to be impregnable.

In curious contrast with this ponderous work stands the little volume *A Treatise on the Religious Affections*, full of sweetness and rapt spiritual character, and often very near to poetry in its lofty conceptions and gentle spirit.

REQUIRED READING. — Selections from Holmes' "Jonathan Edwards," in *Pages from an Old Volume of Life*.

#### 4. THOMAS HUTCHINSON (1711-1780).

"For intellectual gifts and accomplishments, he stood far above all the other Colonial governors." — *John Fiske*.

**Life.** — (No life of Governor Hutchinson has ever been written. The best source of information concerning him is his *Diary and Letters*, first published in 1884-1886. See also Hosmer's *History of Massachusetts Bay. 1620-1774.* *Samuel Adams*.)

All of the Colonial governors of Massachusetts seem to have been impressed with the idea that they must give to posterity a faithful record of all their doings. Thomas Hutchinson, the last of the governors under British rule, conceived the idea of writing a complete history of the province from the time of the first settlement until the Revolutionary

*History of  
Massachusetts  
Bay.  
1620-1774.  
Diary and  
Letters.*

War. To this he gave the title *The History of Massachusetts Bay*, publishing it in three volumes, the last one appearing one year after the author's death.

Governor Hutchinson was fortunate in respect to materials for his work, having access to many documents and sources of information long since lost. From these he compiled, with excellent judgment and rare scholarship, a work which will always be regarded as the highest authority. The author was not pleasing to the people of the Colonies on account of his Tory principles, and for this reason his history never became a popular one.

REQUIRED READING.—Selections from *Hutchinson's History*.



## IV.

### BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

1706-1790.

“The first philosopher and indeed the first great man of letters for whom we are beholden to America.” — *David Hume*.

**Pennsylvania.** — (See Goldwin Smith's *On the Foundation of the American Colonies*, 26; also Tyler, II., 225.)

The life and work of Benjamin Franklin turn our eyes for the first time toward the Middle Colonies. The Plantation of Pennsylvania, with which his life after the age of seventeen was identified, has in its

*Autobiography.*  
*Father Abraham's Speech.*  
*Essays and Letters.*  
*Works in 10 volumes.*

history much to remind one of early New England. It was settled by those who came for conscience' sake. The Quakers were as zealous in their efforts to found schools as were the men of Massachusetts; they were as unworldly, as serious, and as intellectual as were the Puritans themselves. Unlike the Puritans, they were not persecutors, nor did they ever interfere with the liberty of the press.

Early in the eighteenth century, about the time that Franklin appeared in Philadelphia, that city was the centre of literary activity second only to Boston. It is said that there are now in the old library of Philadelphia, “four hundred and twenty-five original books and

pamphlets that were printed in that city before the Revolution." — *Wharton's Prov. Lit. of Pa.*

**Thomas Godfrey.** — (Tyler, 244–251, with extract.) Most of these early writers have been forgotten though some have found immortality in *The Autobiography*. Only one, Thomas Godfrey, son of the Thomas Godfrey mentioned by Franklin, deserves consideration here. Born in Philadelphia in 1736, he became a watchmaker and a writer of verses, dying at the early age of twenty-eight. Two years after his death there appeared in Philadelphia his collected verses entitled *Juvenile Poems on Various Subjects; with the Prince of Parthia, a Tragedy*. The poems possess little merit, but the drama is a strong production. It being the first dramatic composition produced in America, its young author enjoys the distinction of being the father of the American drama.

**Life of Franklin.** — (Biographies of Franklin in English, French, and German, and studies of his life-work and character, by many eminent writers, are numerous. Any one wishing the complete list should consult *The Franklin Bibliography* of all the works written by or relating to Franklin, by Paul L. Ford, Brooklyn, 1889. The most helpful *Lives* for school use are by Jared Sparks, 1844; by James Parton, 1864; by John T. Morse, Jr., 1890. See also Everett's *Boyhood and Youth of Franklin*, and Hale's *Franklin in France*, 1877. The most useful books, however, to the student of American Literature are *The Autobiography*, completed by Bigelow, and *Benjamin Franklin as a Man of Letters*, by

J. Bach McMaster, 1890.) Whoever attempts, even briefly, to tell the story of Franklin's life, does so under great disadvantages, for a comparison with *The Autobiography* is sure to result. The biographer can do no better than quote frequently from this work.

**The Early Life of Franklin.**— “My father married young, and carried his wife, with three children, to New England about 1685. . . . His family increased to seventeen, of whom I remember to have seen thirteen sitting together at his table, who all grew up to years of maturity and were married. I was the youngest son and the youngest of all the children except two daughters. I was born in Boston in New England. My mother, the second wife of my father, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather in his ecclesiastical history of that country, entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*. . . . My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades. I was put to the grammar school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me, as the tithe of his sons, to the service of the church. My early readiness in learning to read, which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read, and the opinion of all his friends that I should certainly make a good scholar, encouraged him in this purpose of his. My uncle Benjamin, too, approved of it, and proposed to give me his short-hand volumes of sermons, to set up with, if I would learn his short-hand. I continued however at the grammar school rather less than a year, though in that time I had risen gradually from the middle class of that year to be at the head of the same class, and was removed into the next class, whence I was to be placed in the third at the end of the year.

“But my father, burdened with a numerous family, was unable, without inconvenience, to support the expense of a college education. Considering, moreover, as he said to one of his friends in my presence, the little encouragement that line afforded to those educated for it, he gave up his first intentions, took me from the grammar school and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic

kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownwell. . . . Under him I learned to write a good hand pretty soon, but failed entirely in arithmetic. At ten years old I was taken to help my father in his business, which was that of a tallow chandler and soap boiler, a business to which he was not bred, but had assumed on his arrival in New England, because he found that his dyeing trade being in little request, would not maintain his family. Accordingly, I was employed in cutting wicks for the candles, filling the moulds for cast candles, attending to the shop, going of errands, etc. . . . I continued thus in my father's business for two years, that is till I was twelve years old; and my brother John, who was bred to that business, having left my father, married and set up in business in Rhode Island, there was every appearance that I was destined to supply his place and become a tallow chandler. But my dislike to the trade continuing, my father had apprehension that, if he did not put me to one more agreeable, I should break loose and go to sea as my brother Josiah had done, to his great vexation. . . . From my infancy I was passionately fond of reading and all the money that came into my hands was laid out in the purchasing of books. . . . This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son James of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded and signed the indenture when I was but twelve years old." — *The Autobiography*.

**In Philadelphia.** — Franklin's story of his early attempts at self-improvement should be read by every youth. In his brother's office he learned rapidly, but he seems to have had numerous difficulties with his master, and at the age of seventeen we find him running away to New York. Not finding work there, he proceeded to Philadelphia. The next year he was

lured by Sir William Keith to London, and soon found himself penniless. Here he worked with great industry for two years, in which time he succeeded in earning enough to buy a complete printing outfit, enabling him at the age of twenty to settle in Philadelphia in an office of his own. In 1730, he bought the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and from this time his progress toward fame and power was very rapid. His paper exerted a wide influence both in literature and politics. It strongly advocated everything that promised good to the public. Through Franklin's influence a public library was started in Philadelphia; he founded the American Philosophical Society and the University of Pennsylvania. In 1753, he was appointed Postmaster General for the Colonies, when he at once revolutionized the mail service of the times. He spared no labor for the public good. At one time he made a carriage journey of six months through the Colonies, visiting every office. He was sent several times to England as ambassador to the king in behalf of the Colonies, and, in 1766, secured the repeal of the obnoxious Stamp Act. He was a member of the Continental Congress of 1775, and of all the important conventions until after the adoption of the Constitution. During the Revolution he was minister to England and France, at which time his services can hardly be overestimated. The complete biography of this remarkable man is in reality a history of the most important epoch in our nation's life. He died in Philadelphia at the ripe age of eighty-four.



**Poor Richard's Almanac.** — (See Parton's *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*, I., 227–240.) Franklin did more for literature as an influence than as an actual producer. He was only incidentally a man of letters. He was greater as a statesman, a diplomatist, a scientist, than as a writer, and yet his literary productions are of great value. Perhaps the best known of all his writings are the series of essays and proverbs which appeared originally in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, an annual publication which was first issued in 1833, bearing the pseudonym “Richard Saunders, Philomath,” and which was continued with great success for nearly quarter of a century.

“I endeavored to make it both entertaining and useful; and it accordingly came to be in such demand that I reaped considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten thousand. And observing that it was generally read, scarce any neighborhood being without it, I considered it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people, who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occurred between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, ‘it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.’ These proverbs, which contain the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembled and formed into a connected discourse, prefixed to the almanac of 1757, as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction. The bringing all these scattered counsels thus into a focus enabled them to make greater impression. The piece, being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the continent; reprinted in Britain on a broadside to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in French, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants.” — *The Autobiography*.



Franklin's proverbs have become household words. Every one has heard from childhood,

"Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

"God helps them that help themselves."

"Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee."

"Three removes are as bad as a fire."

REQUIRED READING. — "Father Abraham's Speech." See also *Riverside Literature Series*, No. 24. For fac-simile of a page of *Poor Richard's Almanac*, see Fiske's *History of the United States*, p. 186.

### THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

"The best Autobiography in the language."

"Franklin is his own Boswell." — *Lawrence*.

This work, written in the seventy-ninth year of his age, is Franklin's chief contribution to literature. It tells the story of his life up to the year 1757. After reading it one has a perfect picture of its author. It has become the world's model for an autobiography. Nowhere in literature can we find a more complete opening of an author's heart to the public. Its popularity has been wonderful, fifty editions having been disposed of in this country alone.

The history of the manuscript of the work has been an interesting one. The grandson of Franklin, who was a Tory pensioner, caused the work to be suppressed. It was printed, however, in French in 1791, but not till 1817 was it published in the original English. In John Bigelow's edition of the book the original spelling is retained, and the story is told exactly as Franklin wrote it.

## A STUDY OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

(AFTER A CAREFUL READING OF AS MUCH OF IT AS POSSIBLE.)

Give reason for each statement:

I. WORDS. — What percentage have more than two syllables? Are there many of Latin derivation? of Saxon? Are any used that might be dropped? If so, give example. Does he use commonplace words, sometimes not elegant ones? Are his words on the whole well chosen? Where did he get his command of words?

II. SENTENCES. — Long and involved? Periodic? Balanced? Short and clear? Obscure? Or yielding their meaning easily? What adjectives describe Franklin's sentences?

III. STYLE. — Interesting or dry? Give example to prove statement. Is it ornamental? Are there figures of speech? Give example. Are there many quotations from other authors? Allusions to history which must be looked up to be understood? Are there words and phrases from other languages? Chiefly from what language? What adjectives describe his style? From whom did he learn it, judging from his own account? How does it compare with *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe*?

IV. SUBJECT MATTER. — (a) What purpose had the author in writing the book? To instruct? To magnify himself? To produce a literary work? To reward friends and punish enemies? To discover the moral of life? If none of these, what was his object? (b) Is the story important? How much of the story of the times is incidentally told? How important an epoch did it cover? What leading historical events are touched? (c) Is it complete? Is the author honest? Is anything concealed?

Does he omit to mention when he was wrong? Is he proud of his faults?

V. Why has the book had such a wonderful popularity?

**Essays and Papers.** — The remainder of Franklin's literary work consists of essays on various topics, *The Busybody*, a series after the style of Addison, being prominent; papers on scientific topics, political essays, and letters. Some of his lighter work, like "The Whistle," and "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout," have been very popular.

**Franklin's Versatility.** — Franklin is the best example of a self-made man that history affords. No American has ever achieved greatness in so many directions. He ornamented everything that he touched, whether science, literature, invention, or statescraft. In science he made the discovery that electricity is the cause of lightning, and he wrote papers on electricity and kindred subjects that won the admiration of Europe. He invented the stove, lightning rod, and water organ. He organized the first police force, and the first fire company. His name is signed to all the great documents of our early history. In addition to all this, he was one of the first statesmen of his age and perhaps the ablest representative our nation has ever sent abroad.

## V.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

1765-1812.

FROM THE STAMP ACT CONGRESS TO THE SECOND WAR WITH  
ENGLAND.

**Colonial Union.** — We have already seen that during the preceding period a new idea had been steadily growing throughout the plantations of America, — an idea undreamed of in earlier days. The Colonies had been settled at different times and for widely different reasons. The primary motive of many of them had been to seek isolation, to found a new order of things in a corner of the earth. The mere suggestion of a union with the Colony of Pennsylvania, or indeed with any other plantation, would have made a Massachusetts Puritan open wide his eyes in amazement.

But the thirteen Colonies represented England's share of the great Continent of North America, and, as viewed from across a thousand leagues of ocean, they appeared rather as one vast possession settled in thirteen places, than as thirteen units with little connection. British policy was ever in advance of Colonial thought. England had recognized her American possessions as a unit almost from the beginning, passing the first of the Navigation Acts as early as 1651. From this time

onward, all of that series of selfish commercial laws, familiar to the student of our early history, were passed by the British Ministry to affect the Colonies as a whole. To protest successfully against such laws required co-operation. A common grievance furnished a bond of sympathy. After all, the Colonists were brothers, and blood told. It is not hard to see that all through the Colonial age almost every circumstance seemed destined to draw the Colonies nearer together, and that the necessity for union came ever from English interference.

**The Growth of New Ideas.** — Under the press of new problems the first motives that had led pilgrims to the New World were beginning to be forgotten. Early prejudices were growing dim. The tyranny of royal governors had forced upon the Colonists many a lesson in politics. The French wars, besides bringing the different sections into contact, had shown the people their strength and their weakness. The oppression of England's commercial policy had created a bond of sympathy between Colonies that previously had been strangers to each other. Other agencies were at work which need not be enumerated, and altogether it is not strange that the idea of a permanent union should have entered into the minds of some. William Penn had suggested such an idea in 1697; Daniel Cox of New Jersey had discussed its advantages in 1722; Franklin, in the Albany Convention of 1754, held at the opening of the French and Indian War, where most of the New England and Middle Colonies were represented, had proposed "a plan for the union of all the Colonies under one government."

But this plan had been rejected both by the English and the Americans, each regarding it as giving the other too much power.

SUGGESTED READING. — Franklin's Plan of Union. Old South Leaflets.

**The Year 1765.** — Union was finally forced upon the Colonies. In 1765 came the obnoxious Stamp Act, at which the indignation at British injustice that had been increasing for half a century burst into flame from New Hampshire to Georgia. The New York Convention of 1765 where representatives from nine different Colonies

1763. The Treaty of Paris ending the French and Indian War.

1765. The Stamp Act. The Albany Convention. Patrick Henry's speech in Virginia.

1768. Troops sent to Massachusetts.

1770. Boston Massacre.

1773. Boston Tea Party.

1774. Boston Port Bill.

Continental Congress.

1775. April 19. Battles of Lexington and Concord.

met in assembly was the result. It is significant that many of the leading men of America, men who were to stand shoulder to shoulder in the great contest for liberty which was soon to come, here met each other as strangers. This was the first *American* Congress. It came to an end with the Stamp Act, which gave it birth. Nine years later, after the Boston Port Bill and the act subverting the charter of Massachusetts, the famous Continental Congress met in Philadelphia. All prejudices were forgotten. A common danger made Puritan and Quaker meet as brothers. Virginia ordered that the day on which the Boston Port Bill went into effect should

be kept as a day of fasting and prayer.

The Continental Congress was designed to meet only the crisis at hand. Had the grievances been withdrawn,



it would have shared the fate of the Stamp Act Congress, and no permanent union would have been consummated.

**The Spirit of the Age.**—The story of the Revolution need not be told, for every American is familiar with this important and desperate struggle. It was our Heroic Age. Compelled by force of circumstance, the Colonists turned the old Puritan earnestness from religion to war and politics. The magnificent training, the self-control, the hardy endurance, and the self-reliance, that a century and a half of frontier life, with its struggle with rocky fields and savage men and beasts, had developed, stood them in good stead now. They put all of their mighty energy and unconquerable will into the contest, but it was a task to discourage the stoutest heart.

“These are the times that try men’s souls,” wrote Thomas Paine in 1776. “The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

Out of this furnace came the pure gold of our national character. It made our government and our literature possible. When the struggle was over, the discordant voices of Colonial days, and local prejudices, and ideals, were all blended into one great, homogeneous whole.

**The Literature of the Age.**—The spirit of the age had a powerful influence upon its literary product. Polemics gave place to politics. Dry theological arguments and pamphlet sermons, gave way to burning oratory and the docu-

1709-1784.  
Samuel Johnson.  
1716-1771.  
Thomas Gray.

1729-1797.  
Edmund Burke.

1728-1774.  
Oliver Goldsmith.

1731-1800.  
William Cowper.

1759-1796.  
Robert Burns.

1759-1806.  
William Pitt,  
son of "the  
Great Com-  
moner."

ments and arguments of statesmen. As in the last period, the literature, since it was written for purely practical ends, is valuable now only so far as it gives us a knowledge of the stirring days in which it was produced. American literature written for its own sake was almost unknown. It was not until the Nineteenth Century had fairly begun that Irving, the first

American man of letters, appeared, and the dawn of American literature began to brighten.

**Three Periods.** — (An excellent bibliography of the authorities on the American Revolution is contained in Winsor's *Handbook of the American Revolution*. The same author's *History of America* contains an exhaustive descriptive bibliography of manuscript sources and printed authorities on United States history. The best single history of the period is undoubtedly Fiske's *American Revolution*. Among other authorities may be mentioned Green's *Historical View of the American Revolution*; Lossing's *Field Book of the Revolution*; Frank Moore's *Diary of the American Revolution*, a collection of sources of history; Frothingham's *Rise of the Republic*, and the biographies and writings of Washington and all other participators in the war. The most valuable and interesting book for young people is, without question, Fiske's *War of Independence*.) The Revolutionary Age may be subdivided into three distinct periods: (The Period of Remonstrance, 1765-1775; the Period of Resistance, 1775-1783;) and the Period of

Reconstruction, 1783-1812. The last date, however, is a purely arbitrary one.

### I. PERIOD OF REMONSTRANCE.

1765-1775.

The year 1765, that witnessed the Stamp Act Congress, the first organized attempt of any magnitude to protest against the measures of Great Britain, marks the opening of a new era. Viewed from a literary standpoint, the period is unimportant, although it is marked by the appearance of several orators of great brilliancy. That orators always precede revolution has been shown in every great uprising of the American people. The pre-Revolutionary orators rely for their fame chiefly upon tradition. Their work to a large degree has been lost. There were no reporters at those early gatherings of the patriots to catch the words that fell burning from the speakers' lips, and the orators of those stirring times had other things to do than record their own words for the use of posterity. Nevertheless, from the fragments that have come down to us and from the testimony of contemporaries, we know that the orations of these men must have been full of intensity and fire, and that many of them deserve a place among the masterpieces of the world.

#### 1. SAMUEL ADAMS (1722-1803).

"He, better than any one else, may be taken as a representative of the people of New England and of the spirit with which they engaged in the Revolutionary struggle." — *Hawthorne*.

Life (by W. V. Wells, 1865; by J. K. Hosmer, 1885.

Both of these books are of great value, giving vivid and authentic pictures of all the men and events of the times of which they treat. For a scholarly study of Samuel Adams and his work, see Johns Hopkins University Studies, II., 207. See also Hezekiah Butterworth's *Patriot Schoolmaster*, 1894, a book of interest to the young). So zealous a fighter for Colonial rights was this stout-hearted old patriot in the stormy days preceding the Revolution, that he gained the distinction, at the time of the Amnesty of 1774, of being the only man, Hancock excepted, that England could not pardon. A native of Boston, a member of the Harvard class of 1740, a prominent figure in the Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and for two years governor of Massachusetts,—such are the main facts in the life of Samuel Adams. It is as an orator that he deserves mention in a history of American literature, though only fragments of his fiery oratory have come down to us. Tradition, however, mentions him as a speaker to be compared with Otis and Quincy. The writings of Samuel Adams have never been collected.

REQUIRED READING. — *Grandfather's Chair*, iii. 6.

## 2. JAMES OTIS (1725–1783).

“The Patrick Henry of New England.”

In 1761, after the act of Parliament restricting all manufacturing in the Colonies and all trade with other nations and even with the plantations, a question arose in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts as to the legal

right of Parliament to bind the Colonies to such an extent. The investigation of this case, which involved the very questions that were afterwards to be settled by arms, was conducted for the Crown by the King's Attorney General, and for the Colonies by James Otis, a young Massachusetts lawyer. John Adams, who was a witness of the trial, has given us this picture of the oratory of Otis on this occasion :

*Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives.* 1762.

*Rights of the British Colonies asserted.* 1764.

*Considerations on Behalf of the Colonists.* 1765.

"Otis was a flame of fire! With a promptitude of classical allusion, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him. American independence was then and there born. Every man of an unusually crowded audience appeared to me to go away ready to take up arms against Writs of Assistance. . . . James Otis then and there breathed into this nation the breath of life."

**Life** (by William Tudor, 1823). Otis was born in West Barnstable, Massachusetts, in 1725, and was graduated at Harvard in 1743. His oratory, which was even more impetuous and fiery than that of Adams, easily obtained for him the leadership of the patriot party in Massachusetts.

In 1767, at the very height of his usefulness and at the very crisis of affairs in America, the mind of the young leader failed him. For fourteen years he lingered on, a pitiful ruin, dying in the very year that brought freedom and peace to his country. It is well known that the stirring speech of the reading books, so long

a favorite with schoolboys, was written by Mrs. Child as a part of her novel, *The Rebels*.

### 3. JOSIAH QUINCY (1744-1775).

Josiah Quincy completes the remarkable trio of orators that Massachusetts furnished for the patriot cause.

Like Adams and Otis, he graduated at Harvard, to become soon after prominent as a lawyer in Boston. In spite of a slight frame and feeble health, he had a voice of great compass and beauty. His oratory, while not so impetuous as that of Otis, is described as being very pleasing and persuasive. His industry was wonderful. He successfully defended the soldiers implicated in the Boston Massacre, made numerous speeches in town meetings and public assemblies, and wrote many stirring articles for the periodicals of his time. In 1774 he was sent on a private mission to England, where he accomplished much as a zealous advocate of Colonial rights. He died on the return voyage, in his thirty-first year, just at the opening of the great struggle. It was hard indeed for the Colonies at such a time to lose young men of the stamp of Otis, and Warren, and Quincy. The writings of Quincy, as preserved in the biography written by his son, are full of force and fire and a lofty patriotism.

*Observations on the Boston Port Bill. 1774.*

**Josiah Quincy, 2d (1772-1864).** — The family of the Quincys, like that of the Adamses, with which it is allied, has been in many ways a remarkable one. During three generations each has been prominent in poli-



tics and literature. Josiah Quincy, son of the above, was for many years a leading figure in Congress. He strongly opposed the second war with England, and the extension of United States territory by the admission of Louisiana. He was president of Harvard College from 1829 to 1845. His principal works are his *Memoir of Josiah Quincy*, 1825; *The History of Harvard University*, 1840; *Municipal History of Boston*, 1852, and *Life of John Quincy Adams*, 1858.

(See *Life* by his son Edmund, the author of *Wensley, a Tale of New England*; also Lowell's *My Study Windows*, pp. 83-114.)

#### 4. PATRICK HENRY (1736-1799).

"The most wonderful of orators." — *Jefferson*.

"Full of the fire and splendor of the South."

Again, after a century and a half, the attention of the student of American literature is turned toward Virginia. The almost feudal system of society, which prevailed in this State, had been especially favorable to the development of leaders. While New England was busying herself with religious cavils, Virginia was training men who were to become skilled in statescraft, in oratory, in worldly wisdom. This not only gave her the generalship of the War of Independence, but when peace came it enabled her to furnish the young republic with some of the most wonderful statesmen of any century.

**Life of Patrick Henry** (by William Wirt, 1817, — very

luxuriant in its style, looked upon with suspicion by many on account of its manifest hero worship; by Alexander Everett in Sparks' *Library of American Biography*; by Moses Coit Tyler in *American Statesmen Series*. See, also, McMaster's *History of the United States*, Vol. I.). The first voice to call attention back to Virginia was that of Patrick Henry. His fervid speech before the Virginia Assembly of 1765, met to discuss the passage of the Stamp Act, brought him at once into prominence as a wonderful orator. In the torrent of his eloquence he had swept all before him. "Cæsar had his Brutus," he cried; "Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—" Loud cries of "Treason! treason!" interrupted him. Pausing till they had subsided, he added "may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it."

But Henry's greatest effort was delivered in March, 1775, in the Virginia Convention, met to discuss the question whether that Colony should be immediately put into a state of defence. Of this speech we have no verbatim copy. The draft given by his biographer, William Wirt, contains only the substance of Henry's oration, the actual wording without doubt being from Wirt's pen. But we know that the effect of the oration was electrical. In a rapid stream of eloquence he swept down all opposition. Every one is familiar with the wonderful words given by Wirt.

"It is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission or slavery. Our chains are forged; their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevi-

table and let it come: I repeat it, sir, let it come. It is vain to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry 'Peace! Peace!' but there is no peace. The war has actually begun. The next gale that sweeps from the North will bring to our ears the crash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field, why stand we here idle?"

The orator had spoken with the voice of a prophet. The news of Lexington and Concord was already in the air.

The career of Patrick Henry centres about these two great efforts. He had been admitted to the bar after studying law six weeks, but he had been a "briefless barrister" until 1765, when he at once became the hero of Virginia. Every honor was held out to him, but after serving twice as governor of the State, he left public life, even refusing several important Federal offices which came to him in his last years.

His oratory appeals strongly to the emotions. In his legal practice he depended more on the spell which his eloquence threw over the jury, than on a mastery of the legal intricacies of the case. He was fervid rather than weighty; superficial and hasty rather than deep. His oratory abounds in figurative language; it is sometimes overwrought, even turgid, full of exaggerations and extravagant rhapsodies, yet when joined with the fire, the energy, the flashing eye, the impassioned voice of the man who originated it, it was irresistible.

REQUIRED READING.—Henry's speech before the Virginia Convention.

## II. THE PERIOD OF RESISTANCE.

1775-1783.

This period of American history, so full of romance and heroism, growing more and more dim and vague with every year, has furnished historians, poets, novelists, and painters with a wonderful background for romantic songs and tales and pictures. Longfellow has told the stirring tale of "Paul Revere's Ride" on the night before Lexington; Emerson in his "Concord Hymn" has sung how

"the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world."

Holmes has given us "Grandmother's Story of the Bunker Hill Battle," and Cooper, who with a master hand has pictured in *Lionel Lincoln* the same desperate struggle, knew well the romantic possibilities of the field, as many of his other novels show. Bryant sang of "Seventy-six," and the "Song of Marion's Men"; Simms, in *The Partisan*, told in prose the thrilling story of the Robin Hood of the South Carolina Swamps; John P. Kennedy, in *Horse-shoe Robinson*, told the story of King's Mountain; Mrs. Child wrote *The Rebels, a Tale of the Revolution*; Thompson, in *The Green Mountain Boys*, caught the romance of Ticonderoga; Hawthorne threw his mystic charm over the period in *Septimius Felton*, and Theodore Winthrop, with his bright, breezy style, found life in it for his *Edwin Brothertoft*.

But while the period has furnished a fruitful field for later writers, it produced no immediate literary results. With every energy bent on the work of war, there was no time for literary production. Only one writer need be mentioned.

### 1. THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809).

"The impartial historian must declare that liberty owes nearly as much to the courageous advocacy of Paine, as to the military services of Washington." — *Underwood*.

**Life** (by George Chalmers, 1791; by William Cobbett, 1796; by James Cheatham, 1809; by Gilbert Vale, 1891, and by several others. The most valuable complete edition of his writings is that edited by Moncure D. Conway, 1895). It is a noteworthy fact that the most powerful champion of Colonial freedom during the American Revolution, was a man who, until 1774, had been a loyal subject of England and even an officer under the British government. Paine was born in England of Quaker parentage, 1737. After a varied career as staymaker, privateer, dissenting preacher, and grocer, he at length found his way into the British revenue service, from which, however, he was soon dismissed under a false charge of smuggling. At this critical time in his career he came in contact with Benjamin Franklin, who was then in England, who strongly advised him to cast in his fortunes with the American Colonies. Never did Franklin render his country a greater service. Immediately

*Common Sense.*  
1776.

*The Crisis.* 1776.

*The Rights of Man.* 1791.

*The Age of Reason.*

upon Paine's arrival in America he became editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Two years later he scattered broadcast a powerful political pamphlet advocating, in no uncertain voice, the complete independence of the Colonies. The effect was electrical. The pamphlet struck the keynote of popular feeling, expressing clearly and courageously what every one had scarcely allowed himself to think. Honors were showered upon the bold author. The legislature gave him £500. In December of the same year, he published a little periodical called *The Crisis*, devoted to the furtherance of the cause of liberty. Its opening words, "These are the times that try men's souls," have become famous. Though it appeared only at irregular intervals, and soon suspended entirely, it accomplished much good. The first number, by order of Washington, was read entire before every American regiment.

**After the Revolution** Paine's career was a varied one. In 1787, while in France, he published, in reply to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, *The Rights of Man*, a book which so delighted the French people that he was at once granted citizenship and given a seat in the National Convention. Afterwards, after narrowly escaping the guillotine, he was thrown into prison by Robespierre. It was while in confinement here that he wrote *The Age of Reason*, a bitter attack on the Bible from the deistic standpoint. This book, which was published against the earnestly expressed wishes of Franklin, made its author a host of enemies. With such horror was its author looked upon



by a majority of the American people, that his early services to the cause of liberty were almost forgotten. *The Age of Reason* is unfair in its treatment of the Bible and has been many times answered and confuted.

Paine died in New York in 1809.

### III. THE PERIOD OF RECONSTRUCTION.

1783-1809.

**The Critical Period.** — (See *The Critical Period of American History*, John Fiske.) On the 19th of April, just eight years to a day after the battle of Lexington, the surrender at Yorktown put an end to armed hostilities. In September of the same year the Treaty of Paris left the thirteen Colonies independent of Great Britain. The Americans had won, the ringing of bells and the roaring of cannon voiced their joy, but American independence was not yet assured. Difficulties almost insuperable yet remained. John Fiske has called the six years between the Peace of Paris and the adoption of the Constitution, "the critical period of American history." The problems of war are simple compared with those that follow it. Mere conquest and destruction may be effected by savages, but reconstruction is a work for demigods.

**Union.** — No sooner had peace been declared, than the union of the Colonies,

1788. Trial of Warren Hastings.

1789. French Revolution. Washington inaugurated President.

1793. Louis XVI. beheaded. Reign of Terror in France.

1796. Napoleon's first campaign.

1800. Capital of the United States located at Washington.

1802. Photography invented.

1804. Napoleon Emperor of France.

1805. Trafalgar. Death of Nelson.

1807. Fulton's steamboat on the Hudson.

1783-1830. Bolivar liberates the South American Colonies.

which had been their strength during the war, was forgotten. It had been at best only a temporary joining of strength to ward off a common danger. Even after independence had been won, Union, in the sense in which we now conceive of it, was undreamed of even by the most advanced thinkers. When, in November, 1783, the Continental Army was disbanded, each soldier retired to his home and spoke of himself, not as a citizen of the Independent Colonies of America, but as a citizen of Massachusetts or of Virginia, as the case might be.

The Continental Congress had been a war body simply. It had conducted the war and had contracted enormous debts, but it was powerless to tax the people. The Articles of Confederation were so loose in their binding power that they were practically useless. Each State had its own commercial regulations. Discord arose which threatened to result in thirteen independent nations along the Atlantic coast.

**The Constitution.**—(See P. L. Ford's *Bibliography and Reference List of the Constitution*. The best monographs that have yet appeared on the Framing and Framers of the Constitution are by MacMaster, *Century Magazine*, Vol. 12, p. 746, and by John Fiske, *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1887. See MacMaster's *History of the United States* and Fiske's *Critical Period*.) By 1787, Colonial affairs had drifted into such a chaos of difficulties, that the demand for a definite policy and for immediate action became imperative. Accordingly, in May, delegates to the number of fifty-five, from all the

Colonies, met at Philadelphia to discuss the situation and to form, if possible, the plan for "a more perfect union."

The Convention was a remarkable one. Washington was its president, and Franklin, Hamilton, and Madison were prominent members. "It was an assembly of demi-gods," declared Jefferson. For nearly four months, with closed doors, it wrestled with problems worthy of demi-gods, until on Sept. 17, 1787, thirty-nine of the members signed what was to be the Constitution of the United States of America, "the most wonderful work," says Gladstone, "ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." Almost every article of this document had been the result of compromise either between radicals and conservatives, between North and South, or large States and small ones. Hardly one of the signers could personally endorse every part of the instrument. It divided the people immediately into two factions, from which grew the political parties that have played so conspicuous a part in American politics. The Federalists endorsed the new Constitution, while the Anti-Federalists opposed it vigorously, even endeavoring to prevent its acceptance by the necessary number of States.

On June 21, 1788, the ninth State ratified the Constitution, and the United States of America became an accomplished fact.

- 1782. Webster.
- 1783. Irving.
- 1789. Cooper.
- 1794. Bryant.
- 1796. Prescott.
- 1800. Bancroft.
- 1803. Emerson.
- 1804. Hawthorne.
- 1807. Longfellow.
- 1807. Whittier.
- 1809. Poe.
- 1809. Holmes.

**REQUIRED READING.** — Franklin's Address on the last day of the Constitutional Convention. See also Old South Leaflets for text of the Constitution, with short bibliography.

**The New Nation.** — The Revolutionary Age of our literature does not end with the birth of the new nation. The echoes of the great struggle lingered well into the first decade of the Nineteenth Century. It is the work of time to revolutionize the ideas of a people. The form of government that was offered to the Colonies for their approval was a thing "new under the sun." The Constitution had been forced upon many of the Americans against their better judgment, and deep wounds rankled in many hearts. It was a time of suspicion, "of test cases," of doubt and hesitancy. The new instrument, upon which was to hang the liberties and happiness of the people, had not been tested, and confidence in the central government grew slowly. It was not until after the second war with England that suspicion and doubt began to die away, and that patriotism and love for the united fatherland took root in all hearts.

**Literary Conditions.** — That an independent literature can exist only among nations that are free is an axiom as old as the history of letters. Art cannot flourish without patriotism and without a free fatherland. Athens had been free for a century before she became a literary centre; England was three centuries in producing a Chaucer. There could be no independent literature in America until her sons had learned to trust her implicitly and love her devotedly. Although

much was written in America in Colonial and Revolutionary times, it was not in reality American literature, since it was but an echo of the literature of England.

The writers of the period of reconstruction fall into two groups: "The Nation Builders" and the little band of pioneers that gave the first feeble lisplings of American song and romance.

### 1. GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-1799).

"Virginia gave us this imperial man,  
 Cast in the massive mould  
 Of those high-statured ages old,  
 Which into grander forms our mortal metal ran ;  
 . . . . .  
 Mother of States and undiminished men,  
 Thou gavest us a country giving him."

LOWELL, "Under the Old Elm."

**Life** (by Washington Irving; by Chief Justice Marshall; and by many others. The best life of Washington for young people is H. E. Scudder's). Although Washington was only incidentally a man of letters, his "literary remains," as collected by Jared Sparks, fill twelve large volumes. While these are largely composed of collections of state papers, despatches, messages, and business letters, they contain, nevertheless, many things possessing rare literary value. As a letter writer Washington had few superiors; his journals, notably the account of his famous journey to the Ohio, first published in 1754, are written in clear, concise English; and his farewell addresses are full of

a wisdom and a stateliness worthy in every way of the great man who produced them.

REQUIRED READING. — Washington's "Rules of Conduct," "Journal," "Letters," and "Farewell Addresses." Riverside Literature Series, No. 24.

## 2. JOHN ADAMS (1735-1826).

"His letters . . . are among the best in our literature." — *Underwood*.

**Life** (by Charles Francis Adams, with works in ten volumes, 1850; by J. Q. and C. F. Adams, 1871). The second President of the United States is known in literature chiefly from the charming correspondence that passed between him and his wife during the most stirring period of our history. These letters, which have been given to the world by Charles Francis Adams, are singularly frank and tender. Besides revealing two rare personalities, and an almost ideal domestic life, they possess a literary merit of very high rank.

Adams, aside from the inevitable public documents and messages incident to his position, produced several powerful pamphlets of contemporary interest, and kept a journal which is now of great value to the student of our early national life.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Letters of John and Abigail Adams*, school edition, Taintor Bros.; also Old South Leaflets.

**John Quincy Adams** (1767-1848), the sixth President of the United States, was far more learned and accomplished than his father, though greatly inferior to him



in native ability. Though a constant writer, publishing during his life works on rhetoric, European travel, Shakespearean criticism and biography, besides a book of poems and many political articles, he deserves mention rather as a statesman than an author. Like his father, he kept a full diary, and like him maintained a voluminous and charming correspondence. His life has been written by W. H. Seward, by Josiah Quincy, and by John T. Morse, Jr.

### 3. THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826).

"The most acute philosophic intellect of the time." — *Lawrence*.

**Life** (by his grandson Thomas Jefferson Randolph; by George Tucker; by Henry S. Randall; by James Parton; by John T. Morse, Jr., and by others. See Cooke's *Stories of the Old Dominion*). *Notes on Virginia.*  
*The Declaration of Independence.*

In scholarship and breadth of view Jefferson surpassed all of his contemporaries; in the theory and practice of statescraft he has, perhaps, never had a superior in America. In an oratorical age he never made a set speech in his life; he had only moderate administrative ability, and he cared nothing for the pomp and display that appeal so strongly to most men, but he could pen words that were magnetic. Throughout his career as a statesman, he depended largely on his vigorous prose style for his influence on men and events. As a result, his state papers, his messages and official letters, possess a liter- *Rights of British America.*  
*Letters.*  
*Autobiography.*

ary merit rarely to be found in such documents. Jefferson's monument is the *Declaration of Independence*, which is, without doubt, the most literary, as it is the best known, state paper in America.

In 1784 Jefferson published, at the request of the French government, *Notes on Virginia*, a little book that at once gained a deserved popularity. Besides containing much practical wisdom, it contained many fine studies of natural scenery. At times the author approaches sublimity in his descriptions, as in the following :

“The passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge is, perhaps, one of the most stupendous scenes in Nature. You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain an hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Potomac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterward, that in this place, particularly, they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley—that continuing to rise, they have at length broken over this spot, and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base.”

The impress of Jefferson's powerful mind upon his times is everywhere clearly to be seen. He was in every sense a leader. Opposing the new Constitution, since to his mind it gave too much power to the central government, he immediately became the recognized leader of the Anti-Federalist party. Later, when the Constitution had been adopted by the people, he headed

the strict constructionist faction from which has descended the Democratic party of to-day.

A suggestive coincidence, one that has been immortalized by the eloquence of Webster and other contemporary orators, is the fact that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on the same day, *July 4, 1826*. "The two founders of freedom seemed to rise together to the stars."

SUGGESTED READING.—Webster's *Discourse on the Lives and Services of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson*, 1826; see also Old South Leaflets for text of the *Declaration of Independence*. Jefferson's works have been published in nine volumes.

#### 4. JAMES MADISON (1751–1836).

"The Father of the Constitution."

Life (by William C. Rives, 1866; by John Quincy Adams, 1854; by Sidney H. Gay, 1889). James Madison, the fourth President, completes the remarkable trio of Virginians, who added lustre to our early history. All of the best of Madison's literary work is connected with the Constitution. He made the first draught of this instrument to be presented to the Convention; he was prominent in all the debates that followed; he wrote twenty-nine of the eighty-five *Federalist Papers*, defending and explaining it; and his journal of the debates of the Convention is the most complete and authentic record of that important assembly.

Twenty-nine  
*Federalist  
Papers.*

*Reports of the  
Debates in the  
Federal Con-  
vention.*

*Madison Pa-  
pers*, 3 vols.,  
1840.

REQUIRED READING.—"The Last Day of the Convention," from Madison's *Journal*. Old South Leaflets.

## 5. ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1757-1804).

"Hamilton was the greatest man the country has ever seen, always excepting Washington." — *Chief Justice Marshall*.

"Orator, writer, soldier, jurist, financier." — *From Hamilton's monument*.

**Life** (by his son John C. Hamilton, 1834-1840, with works in several volumes; by George Shed; by John T. Morse, Jr., and by others. Morse's work *The Federalist Papers* is probably regarded as the standard *Life of Hamilton*, though that by H. C. Lodge, in the American Statesman Series, is by all means the best for school use. See also Lodge's *Studies in History*, p. 132).

The brief line, given above, from the monument of Alexander Hamilton, reduces to its lowest terms the career of a remarkably versatile man. First a student in Columbia College; then called from his studies to a brilliant career as a soldier in the patriot army; aide-de-camp to Washington; then jurist winning the praises of such lawyers as Jay and Marshall; member from New York of the Continental Congress and the Federal Convention; author of the greater number of the *Federalist Papers*; then orator for the new Constitution, turning almost single-handed the tide of public sentiment in the crucial State of New York; and finally the first Secretary of the Treasury, creating a financial policy that saved the nation from bankruptcy, — such, in brief, are the main facts in an unusually eventful life.

The public career of Hamilton naturally divides itself in two periods: the first characterized by his efforts to

bring about the adoption of the Constitution; the second marked by his magnificent statesmanship in the service of the new government. It is difficult to determine in which capacity he did the nation the greatest service. His financial policy is summed up in the well-known words of Webster: "He smote the rock of national resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of public credit, and it sprang upon its feet." But it is in connection with his efforts to introduce to the people the new Constitution that Hamilton's fame as a writer depends.

**The Federalist Papers.**—The first number of the *Federalist Papers* appeared in the New York *Independent Gazette* of Oct. 27, 1787, and they continued to appear at semi-weekly intervals for nearly a year. The papers were published under the signature of "Publius," and as a result their authorship has been questioned. It is known, however, that Hamilton originated the idea of the series, and that he contributed the most powerful numbers. The most unprejudiced estimate ascribes fifty-one papers to Hamilton, twenty-nine to Madison, and five to Jay. Although addressed to the people of New York, and written with the primary idea of explaining to them the new Constitution, these essays had a far wider audience. They were copied in all the Colonial papers, exerting an influence for good that cannot be estimated.

The great value of the *Federalist Papers* as treatises on the Constitution and our federal government has been commented upon. John Fiske declares them

“undoubtedly the most profound and suggestive treatise on government that has ever been written.” H. C. Lodge writes:

“The great legal minds have set the seal of their approbation upon them; and in modern times, in the formation of a great empire, statesmen have turned to them and to their principal author as the pre-eminent authority on the subject of federation. The effect of these remarkable essays in converting and forming public opinion can hardly be overestimated.”

REQUIRED READING.—Old South Leaflets, Nos. 1 and 2. See also *The Federalist*, H. C. Lodge, editor, New York, 1888.

**Other Writers.**—The list of remarkable men who laid the foundations of our government and incidentally produced literature, is a long one, yet only a few names need be mentioned here. JOHN JAY (1745–1829), first Chief Justice of the United States, wrote clearly and well on political and legal topics; GOUVERNEUR MORRIS (1752–1816) was a powerful orator; FISHER AMES (1758–1808), a passionate political speaker and newspaper writer, was the ever-ready champion of the New England Federalists; and JAMES MONROE (1758–1831), the seventh President of the United States, wrote several scholarly political works, as *The People the Sovereigns*, etc.

**The First Truly American Literature.**—None of this remarkable group of men aspired to literary distinction; none of them can strictly be called a literary man; nevertheless it was from their pens that the first true American literature came. The creators of the Constitution followed no models. The mark of their



individuality is upon everything that they did and wrote. It was in her political literature that America first broke away from the intellectual chain that bound her to England.

## VI.

### THE SONG AND ROMANCE OF THE REVOLUTION.

#### I. THE POETRY OF THE REVOLUTION.

The War of Independence, that struggle in the forests of a new world, so full of heroism, of romance and poetry, remained unsung for half a century after its close. "No poetry," says Stedman, "was begotten of the rage of that heroic strife ; its humor, hatred, hope, suffering, prophecy, were feebly uttered, so far as verse was concerned, in the mode and language inherited years before from the coarsest English satirists."

But if there was a lack of poetry, there was certainly no lack of versifiers. Rhymed politics at great length burdened the weekly newspapers. Never before was the Muse so harnessed to the political chariot, never since have poems on so ambitious a scale been attempted. Three epics, each of them almost as long as the *Iliad*, are among the poetical products of the period. Says Professor Beers, "An effort was made to establish by *tour de force* a national literature of a bigness commensurate with the scale of American nature, and the destinies of the new republic."

But a literature cannot be made at will by sheer force. The ponderous epics, that so impressed their first readers, are now readable, as Leslie Stephen said of

Johnson's *Irene*, "only by men in whom a sense of duty has been abnormally developed." In them one searches almost in vain for a touch of nature, for a bit of genuine poetry. Almost every line reveals its dependence on English models. The authors openly, even proudly, confessed their imitation. Timothy Dwight published "America, a Poem in the Style of Pope's Windsor Forest," and the same author declared in his poem "Greenfield Hill" that he designed "to imitate the manner of several British poets." When *M'Fingal* appeared, there echoed from all sides, as the highest praise that could be given, the verdict that it could hardly be told from Butler's *Hudibras*.

The Revolutionary rhymers were not fortunate in their models. It was a time when English poetry was at its lowest ebb. The artificial school of Pope had for a century and a half bound British verse with its "ten-linked chain." All that was spontaneous and natural had been frowned upon. The last half of the Eighteenth Century found England without a poet of the first rank and with little promise for the future. The American imitators had to take as guides inferior versifiers like Darwin or Hayley, or go back to Pope and Goldsmith. The new natural school, led by Thomson, and Gray, and Cowper, had as yet made little headway. Later, when the powerful voices of Wordsworth and Coleridge and Southey began to dominate the chorus of English

1731-1800.  
Cowper.  
1770-1850.  
Wordsworth.  
1771-1832.  
Scott.  
1772-1834.  
Coleridge.  
1774-1843.  
Southey.  
1779-1852.  
Moore.  
1788-1824.  
Byron.  
1792-1822.  
Shelley.  
1795-1821.  
Keats.

verse, the Americans would not listen, since these poets were ardent democrats. The splendor of the day of Scott and Byron and Keats was yet to come.

**Songs and Ballads.** — (See Moore's *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution*, 1855; and G. C. Eggleston's *American War Ballads and Lyrics*, 1889.) Every war has its songs and ballads, little waifs that spring up almost spontaneously to die often as quickly. The early Colonial wars were the occasion of a few curious ballads; "The Song of Braddock's Men," a lively little lyric, commencing:

"To arms, to arms! my jolly grenadiers,"

survives from the French and Indian War, and the Revolutionary struggle produced its full quota of verse. While the most of the songs that echoed about the camp-fires of Boston, and Morristown, and Valley Forge have passed into oblivion, they are well represented, perhaps, by such survivors as Jonathan Mitchell Sewall's "War and Washington," an ambitious lyric much sung during the war, and the anonymous "Yankee Doodle," that piece of rollicking doggerel which has become undeservingly famous.

Of ballads of the war large numbers have come down to us in the columns of contemporary newspapers. "The Taxation of America," written in 1778 by Peter St. John, tells at length the early history of the war. "The Ballad of Nathan Hale," the "Tale of John Burgoyne," and "Bold Hawthorne" — the surgeon's record of the cruise of the privateer, *Fair American* — were all

famous in their day. From Philadelphia came the humorous ballad, "The Battle of the Kegs," written by the Francis Hopkinson whose name is signed to the *Declaration of Independence*. Joseph Hopkinson, a son of this early humorist, afterwards wrote the patriotic song, "Hail Columbia," a production of small literary merit, saved from oblivion only by the stirring music to which it is joined. On the Tory side, the unfortunate Major André created, with his "Cow Chase," a comical parody of the old ballad "Chevy-Chase," much fun at the expense of "Mad" Anthony Wayne. The last stanza of this poem seems to have been almost prophetic :

"And now I've closed my epic strain,  
I tremble as I show it,  
Lest this same warrior-drover, Wayne,  
Should ever catch the poet."

In Boston, Robert Treat Paine, Jr., gained great contemporary fame and some seven hundred and fifty dollars in substantial cash, with a little poem entitled "Adams and Liberty," a production which seems dull enough, however, at the present day.

### 1. JOHN TRUMBULL (1750-1831).

"The American Butler."

**Life** (see Moses Coit Tyler's *Three Men of Letters*, 1895; also S. C. Goodrich's *Recollections of a Lifetime*, 1857).

The representative literary product of the Revolutionary Age, the one that, more than all others, breathes forth the spirit of that heroic time, is Trumbull's long, self-styled epic, *M'Fingal*, a poem which deserves the high praise of being numbered among the forces that accomplished our independence. *M'Fingal* was written, so its author tells us, "to satirize the follies and extravagancies of my countrymen, as well as of their enemies." But the follies of his countrymen are lightly touched upon, while *M'Fingal*, who represents the Tories, is destined to defeat and disgrace in every encounter with his sturdy opponents. Utterly confounded by the logic of the Whig champion, with whom he attempts discussion, he is tarred and feathered and forced to flee for his life into the camp of General Gage at Boston. The poem is permeated through and through with a sly humor that was irresistible to its first readers. Like its great model, *Hudibras* it is full of epigram and couplets that provoke quotation.

Trumbull was a native of Connecticut and a member of the class of 1767, at Yale College. After serving as tutor for several years, he studied law with John Adams in Boston, afterwards practising his profession in Hartford, where for eighteen years he was a judge of the Superior Court. His complete poetical works were first published in Hartford by S. C. Goodrich, in 1820.

SUGGESTED READING. — Tyler's *Three Men of Letters*.



## 2. TIMOTHY DWIGHT (1752-1817).

**Life** (by W. B. Sprague in Sparks' *American Biography*, Vol. 14; also *Memoir* by his son, Sereno O. Dwight. See Goodrich's *Recollections*).

Although the author of an epic in eleven books and of several other ambitious productions in heroic verse, Timothy Dwight, as might be expected of a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, is better known as a theologian, scholar, and educator than as

*The Conquest of Canaan.* 1785.  
*Greenfield Hill.*  
*Theology Explained and Defended.*  
*Travels in New England and New York.* 4 vols.

a poet. After his graduation at Yale, in 1769, he became successively a tutor in the college, a chaplain in the Continental Army, pastor at Northampton and Greenfield Hill, and, during the last twenty-two years of his life, the president of Yale College. His principal prose work, *Theology Explained and Defended*, was delivered in the form of sermons, one hundred and seventy-three in number, before the Yale students.

While in the Continental Army Dwight composed several patriotic songs, the one best known beginning

“Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,  
The queen of the world and the child of the skies.”

His long and dreary epic, *The Conquest of Canaan*, written in the rhymed couplets of Pope, is excessively unnatural and monotonous throughout. The same may be said of nearly all of his rhyming attempts, though *Greenfield Hill* contains here and there a true poetic touch. Several of his hymns still retain their place in

the hymn books, the best known being his metrical version of the 83d Psalm :

“ I love thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode.”

His *Travels in New England and New York*, notes of vacation rambles, are full of keen observation and have a permanent value.

In scholarship and force of character, Dwight has had few superiors since Edwards.

### 3. JOEL BARLOW (1755-1812).

**Life** (by Charles B. Todd, 1886 ; also, Tyler's *Three Men of Letters*, 1895 ; and Everest's *Poets of Connecticut*).

Joel Barlow completes the somewhat remarkable trio of “ epic poets ” that made Connecticut prominent during the Revolutionary period.

*The Columbiad.* 1808. His early history does not much differ from that of

*Hasty Pudding.* Trumbull and Dwight. Like them he

entered Yale College, graduating in 1778 ; like Dwight

he joined the Continental Army as chaplain, and like

Trumbull he afterwards entered the legal profession.

He had recited an ambitious poem at his graduation

and nine years later had published by subscription *The*

*Vision of Columbus*, but these and other poems from his

pen he incorporated in his colossal epic, *The Columbiad*.

This book, first published in 1808, with engravings

executed in London, was the most magnificent speci-

men of book-making that had ever been attempted in

America. From a literary point of view, however, it ranks among the curiosities of American literature. In ten books and over seven thousand lines it tells, in the metre of Pope, the entire history of America both real and imaginary. The poet represents Hesper as conducting Columbus to a lofty elevation, whence he shows him at a glance all the future kingdoms of the New World and the glory of them. The varied panorama of American history is unfolded before him and he is duly impressed with the tremendous possibilities open to the young republic. The theme is certainly broad enough for an epic, but unfortunately Barlow was not an epic poet. There are here and there beautiful passages, but the poem is unwieldy, full of digressions and curious expressions. Hawthorne declared that it should be dramatized and put upon the stage to the accompaniment of artillery and thunder and lightning.

Barlow's humorous little poem *Hasty Pudding*, written in France in 1793 and dedicated to Martha Washington, is his best claim to remembrance. As a statesman and diplomatist Barlow holds a high place in American history. He was consul to Algiers and to France, besides being sent at different times on many important foreign missions.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Hasty Pudding*, Canto I.

“**The Hartford Wits.**” — With Trumbull, Dwight, and Barlow as leaders, Yale became for a time the intellectual centre and Hartford the literary capital of America. About these gathered a really brilliant little

band of ephemeral versifiers who lent their aid to the Federalist party, and with their spicy satirical poems gave picturesqueness to the controversy of the times. First appeared *The Anarchiad* (1786-87), a long poem written in concert by Barlow, Trumbull, David Humphreys, and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins, and published in the *New Haven Gazette*. Afterwards followed *The Echo*, and *The Political Greenhouse*, from the pens of Richard Alsop, Hopkins, Theodore Dwight, a son of Timothy Dwight, and others. But the brilliancy of these "Pleiades of Connecticut" was only a passing phenomenon.

#### 4. PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832).

**Life** (by E. A. Duyckink, with *Poems of Philip Freneau*, 1865).

Although Trumbull, the laureate of the age, made the grand prophecy that

"Fame shall attend and future years admire,  
Barlow's strong flight and Dwight's poetic fire,"

"The Wild  
Honeysuckle."  
"To a Honey  
Bee."  
"The House of  
Night."  
"The Indian  
Burying  
Ground."  
"The Indian  
Student."  
"The Parting  
Glass."

the fame of all these poets has vanished with their generation, while a contemporary, an unpretentious scribbler of newspaper verse, who shared nothing in the prophecy, has become immortal simply because he forgot once or twice the lifeless rules and models of his age and sang spontaneously of Nature.

Philip Freneau was born in New York City, of French parentage, in 1752. He received his education

at Princeton, New Jersey, where he was a classmate and roommate of James Madison, but before he had settled down to the study of his chosen profession of law, the Revolution changed his plans. During the struggle his burlesques and patriotic lyrics were very popular with the patriots, and after its close he continued to pour out a surprising amount of political verse, the most of it written in support of Jefferson and his party. In 1790 he became editor of the *New York Advertiser*. Later he was appointed translator in the State Department at Philadelphia, then the seat of government, serving in the meantime as editor of the *National Gazette*. In 1797, after editing for a time the *Jersey Chronicle*, he started in New York *The Timepiece and Literary Chronicle*, which had, however, but a brief existence. During the last years of his life he was the commander of a coasting vessel plying between southern ports and the West Indies.

No less than twelve editions of single poems and collections of poems, some of which bore the imprint of their author, appeared during Freneau's lifetime. But while the most of these are no better than the average newspaper verses of his day, among them there is to be found here and there a thing of beauty. "The Wild Honeysuckle," a little lyric of four stanzas, is the first bud of that branch of literature which reached its full flower in Bryant, Whittier, and Longfellow. Professor Greenough White declares it "the first stammer of poetry in America." As such, it deserves to be quoted entire:

“Fair flower that does so comely grow,  
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,  
Untouched thy honeyed blossoms blow,  
Unseen thy little branches greet:  
No roving foot shall crush thee here,  
No busy hand provoke a tear.

“By Nature’s self in white arrayed,  
She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,  
She planted here the guardian shade,  
And sent soft waters murmuring by;  
Thus quietly the summer goes,  
Thy days declining to repose.

“Smit with those charms that must decay,  
I grieve to see thy future doom;  
They died — nor were those flowers more gay,  
The flowers that did in Eden bloom;  
Unpitying frosts and Autumn’s power  
Shall leave no vestige of this flower.

“From morning suns and evening dews  
At first thy little blossom came:  
If nothing once, you nothing lose,  
For when you die you are the same:  
The space between is but an hour,  
The frail duration of a flower.”

**The American Landscape.** — As yet the wonderful beauties of the American landscape had been unsung. The glories of the autumn woods, the dreamy haze of the Indian Summer, the dainty wild flowers all new to the botanist, with a language and mythology as yet unknown; the pensive beauties of the springtime; the deer-haunted forest; the little nameless lake afar in the hemlock woods with its legend all untold; the broad prairies; the fading race of red men, — all these were



full of wonderful poetic possibility and awaiting their laureate. Freneau little knew of the possibilities of the wonderland in which he was the pioneer. In his "Indian Burying Ground," his "Indian Student," and other pieces he struck the first poetic note with the Indian for a theme. To the early Americans the Indian had been anything but a poetic creature. He had been looked upon by eyes distorted with terror. In Puritan New England he had been considered an agent of Satan himself. But as he had vanished from his old hunting-grounds the romantic mist that is wont to involve a fading race, no matter how ugly, had begun to enfold him. Freneau was the first to perceive this new light in its literary bearings, and, though he caught it but imperfectly, he deserves praise as the first pioneer in a new literary field.

Freneau's "House of Night," a sombre poem suggesting Coleridge, is the first note in the weird chorus soon swelled by Brown, Poe, and Hawthorne.

REQUIRED READING. — "The House of Night;" "To a Honey Bee;" "The Indian Student."

## II. THE ROMANCE.

[For definition, see preface to Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables*; consult also Richardson, II., 336-340.] Toward the close of the Eighteenth Century the novel of real life, as Fielding wrote it, gave way to the romance, and soon Mrs. Radcliffe was the most popular English writer of fiction. A school of followers immediately

arose, which soon carried this form of fiction beyond bounds that could be tolerated. The field of this school

1717-1797. Horace Walpole.  
*The Castle of Otranto.*

1760-1844. William Beckford.  
*Vathek.*

1764-1823. Ann Radcliffe. *The Mysteries of Udolpho.*

1756-1836. William Godwin.  
*Caleb Williams.*

1755-1818. M. G. Lewis. *The Monk.*

*Tales of Terror.*

1798-1857. Mrs. Shelley. *Frankenstein.*

is well indicated by the titles of the books that it produced. Its most gifted member was Godwin, whose *Caleb Williams* is a powerful though unwholesome romance. The strong, healthful village tales of Jane Austen, and the sturdy romances of Scott, put to flight these pestilent night mists, but not before they had made a lasting impression upon our literature.

**Lack of Background in America.** — (Stedman, Ch. I., 3 ; Richardson, II., 282-284.)

Prose fiction in America is of a comparatively recent date. Romance, with an American background, was hard to make in the early years of the republic when the Colonial and Revolutionary periods seemed as yet too near for romantic perspective. "Everything," wrote Prescott, "wore a spick-and-span new aspect, and lay in the broad garish sunshine of everyday life." Even in recent years we find Hawthorne complaining of the difficulties that attended his work :

"No author, without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no antiquity, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land. It will be very long, I trust, before romance writers may find congenial and easily handled themes, either in the annals of our stalwart republic, or in any characteristic and probable events of our individual lives. Romance and poetry, ivy, lichens, and wall-flowers, need ruin to make them grow." — Preface to *The Marble Faun*.

## CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN (1771-1810).

"They [Brown's novels] are the historical beginning of all imaginative prose literature in America; and it is impossible to understand its development without having read them." — *Thomas Wentworth Higginson*.

**Life** (by William Dunlap, with the 1815 edition of Brown's novels; by W. H. Prescott in Sparks' *American Biography*; by Charles J. Stevenson. An elegant edition of Brown's novels appeared in 1887).

*Wieland.*  
*Ormond.*  
*Arthur Mervyn.*  
*Edgar Huntley.*  
*Clara Howard.*  
*Jane Talbot.*

Brown was born in Philadelphia, of Quaker ancestry, Jan. 17, 1771. Of retiring habits and delicate health, he received much of his education at home, where, left largely to himself, he became an omnivorous reader. At the age of sixteen he had, as was the fashion of his day, planned three epic poems, none of which, fortunately, ever came to maturity. Shortly afterwards he began the study of law, but soon abandoning the profession for which he was in no way fitted, he gave himself wholly to literary work. In 1798, while living in New York City, he published *Wieland*, his first romance, and following this in rapid succession, five others, completing the series upon which his fame depends.

In 1799, Brown established in New York the *Monthly Magazine and American Review*, which died, however, before the year was out. Nothing daunted, he established in Philadelphia the *Literary Magazine and American Register*, which continued with considerable success for five years. During the last of his life Brown

wrote many political pamphlets and several excellent biographies.


*Wieland*, the first of Brown's romances, is a wild, improbable story abounding in stilted description and ghastly incident. The hero, induced by voices that he believes to be from heaven, but which prove to have proceeded from a ventriloquist, deliberately sacrifices with his own hand his wife and children. *Arthur Mervyn*, a vivid picture of the yellow fever scourge in Philadelphia in 1793, written from actual experience, is, for faithfulness of description, almost the equal of Defoe's *Journal of the Great Plague*. *Edgar Huntley; or the Memoirs of a Sleep Walker* is without doubt Brown's strongest work. Its scenes are laid in the wild and almost inaccessible recesses of the early Pennsylvania forests. Aside from the morbid element pervading the book, it might have been written by Cooper. It introduces the Indian, and portrays with rare skill the scenery and life of the woods.

**His Style.** — (Prescott's essay on *Charles Brockden Brown*; Richardson, II., 286–289.) Brown took as his master the English novelist Godwin, and, as a result, his books belong on the same shelf as *Caleb Williams* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Judged by the standards set by Poe and Hawthorne, his work is crude and defective in art. The story is at times tediously spun out; character is dissected with disgusting minuteness; the plots are glaringly improbable; the characters either monsters or angels. He is not even a "clumsy Poe," as some have called him, so vastly inferior is

his art to his who produced the "Fall of the House of Usher."

Brown's excellencies are his graphic portrayals of action and his descriptions of wild nature. He had the art of stimulating expectation;—it is hard to lay down one of his romances unfinished; one reads on and on in a sort of ghastly dream until at length the end of the book completes the hideous nightmare.

SUGGESTED READING.—Prescott's essay on *Charles Brockden Brown*.



## VII.

### THE FIRST CREATIVE PERIOD.

1812-1837.

**The War of 1812.**—(See “Effect of the War of 1812 on the Consolidation of the Union,” J. H. U. Studies, V., 251.) The quarter of a century following the organization of the United States government had been a period of hesitancy and doubt, during which rapid national development and an independent literature were impossible. The workings of the new government, so unlike anything else in the history of nations, had been watched with breathless interest. Would the new Constitution survive a crisis? Would it stand the searching tests of time? Could the nation ever hope to take a secure place beside the powers of Europe?

The second war with England shed a flood of light upon many of these questions; its conclusion opened a new era in American history. In the words of Senator Benton:

“It immensely elevated the national character, and, as a consequence, put an end to insults and outrages to which we had been subject. No more impressments; no more searching our ships; no more killing; no more carrying off to be forced to serve on British ships against their own country. The national flag became respected. It became an Ægis of those who were

1809-1817.  
Madison's  
Administration.  
1814. Washing-  
ton burned by  
the British.



under it. The national character appeared in a new light abroad, we were no longer considered as a people so addicted to commerce as to be insensible to insult. . . . It was a war necessary to the honor and interest of the United States and was bravely fought and honorably concluded, and marks a proud era in our history."—*Thirty Years' View*.

**The New Era.**—The period opening with the close of this war and ending with the financial crash of 1837 has been called, in the words of President Monroe, "the era of good feeling." The doubt and hesitancy of an earlier day had vanished and now patriotism fairly effervesced from the people. It was the day of turgid Fourth-of-July oratory, of "spread-eagle" prophecy, of great expectations. With confidence in the government came new intellectual activity. An independent literature began to be dreamed of. On all sides resounded the hum and activity of a new intellectual life.

**Immigration.**—During the period a new and important factor appeared in American history in the shape of a rapidly increasing immigration from Europe. During two weeks in the summer of 1817, there arrived from the Old World 2,272 people seeking homes in America, and from that time until the present immigrants by the shipload from every quarter of the earth have poured constantly upon us. A part of this motley, polyglot crowd joined the stream of emi-

1815. Jackson's victory at New Orleans.  
1817-1825. Monroe's Administration.  
1825-1829. Adams' Administration.  
1829-1837. Jackson's Administration.

*Thirteen States admitted before the end of the period :*

1791. Vermont.  
1792. Kentucky.  
1796. Tennessee.  
1802. Ohio.  
1812. Louisiana.  
1816. Indiana.  
1817. Mississippi.  
1818. Illinois.  
1819. Alabama.  
1820. Maine.  
1821. Missouri.  
1836. Arkansas.  
1837. Michigan.

grants that soon began to pour into the West, until whole sections and even States became dominated by them. New England and the Middle States were inundated until they were in danger of losing their individuality. As yet it is impossible to estimate the widespread influence that this factor has had upon American history and development.

“Westward Ho!” —

“O you youths, western youths,  
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,  
Plain I see you, western youths, see you tramping with the foremost.

Pioneers; O Pioneers.”

Walt Whitman.

(See Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*. Also Irving's *Captain Bonneville*, and *A Tour on the Prairies*; Paulding's *Westward Ho!* Parkman's *Oregon Trail*; Goodrich's *Recollections of a Lifetime*; Flint's *Recollections*; Drake's *Making of the Great West*; Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, and standard biographies of Jackson, Adams, Calhoun, Clay, Webster, Benton, and Lewis Cass.)

The purchase of the vast Louisiana territory, and the resulting Lewis and Clarke expedition, turned the eyes of all the East westward, and after the cold summer of 1816 and the late spring of 1817, with its attendant famine, a general exodus, which soon assumed enormous proportions, began from the Atlantic States. All through the period long trains of white-topped emigrant wagons, often containing whole communities with all their possessions, were rolling toward the Mississippi. It was literally a “Wild West” that received them. Everything beyond Eastern New York was the primeval wilderness represented in Cooper's novels. In 1825,

when the Erie canal was opened, it ran its entire length through virgin forests. The fertile valleys of the Central States were wild land over which herds of buffaloes swarmed. Beyond the Mississippi only a few hardy adventurers had dared to venture. The settlers followed the parallels of latitude. Little New England villages sprung up about the Great Lakes; the Virginians poured into Kentucky and the neighboring regions; while the Carolinas and Georgia sent their settlers into the territory to the south.

The conditions throughout the period were wild and picturesque. It was another colonial era. The new and strange environment; the Indians and the abundant fauna; the rush and excitement of border life; the new villages springing up by every stream, were but the repetition of the conditions and experience of two centuries before.

**Inventions.** — Another element, that must be considered if we would understand the spirit of the age, was the general introduction of several world-revolutionizing inventions. Whitney's cotton gin marks an era in the history of the South; the steamboat was a powerful factor in the development of our commerce. It brought Europe many days nearer to America, and, plying on the Mississippi and its branches, it greatly aided in opening up the great West. The most rapid development followed the introduction from England of the railroad, and when Morse had perfected the telegraph, the modern era had begun.

1794. Whitney's cotton gin.

1807. Fulton runs his steamboat from New York to Albany.

1830. First passenger train in America.

1835. Morse invents the telegraph.

1844. First telegraph line—Washington to Baltimore

**Literary Conditions.** — (See Godwin's *Bryant*. For Epoch in English Literature, see Arnold, Ch. VII.; Taine, Ch. XVI.) When, as late as 1820, Sidney Smith, in the columns of the *Edinburgh Review*, asked his famous question, "Who reads an American book?" there was, at least on his side of the Atlantic, but one answer. Franklin had been admired throughout England and France as a scientist and a statesman, and Edwards had commanded respect as a metaphysician, but no other American writers were known in Europe. The literary outlook, even when viewed by American eyes, was far from being a bright one. The most patriotic citizen of the new republic could but admit that every literary production in America had been merely a feeble imitation of some English model, and that the charge, as Lowell expressed it, that

"They stole Englishmen's books and thought Englishmen's  
thought,

With English salt on her tail our wild Eagle was caught,"

was true in every particular.

At the close of the Revolutionary period even the imitators had ceased to write; literary production of every variety had come almost to a dead stop, and those who predicted that America could evolve a native literature only after centuries had abundant ground for argument.

The literary situation in America at the close of the Revolutionary period has been admirably summed up by R. H. Stoddard.

“Authorship, as a craft, had no followers except Charles Brockden Brown, who was still editing the *Literary Magazine*, and perhaps John Dennie, who was editing the *Portfolio*. The few poets of which America boasted were silent. Trumbull, the author of *M’Fingal*, which was published the year before Irving’s birth, was a judge of the Superior Court; Dwight, whose *Conquest of Canaan* was published three years later, was merely the president of Yale College; Barlow, whose *Vision of Columbus* was published two years later still, and who had returned to this country after shining abroad as a diplomatist, was living in splendor on the banks of the Potomac and brooding over that unreadable poem which he expanded into the epic of the *Columbiad*; and Freneau, by all odds the best of our early versifiers, who had published a collection of his effusions in 1795, had abandoned the muses and was sailing a sloop between Savannah, Charleston, and the West Indies; Pierpont, who was two years younger than Irving, was a private tutor in South Carolina; Dana was a student at Harvard, and Bryant, a youth of twelve at Cummington, was scribbling juvenile poems which were being published in a newspaper at Northampton. . . . Everybody who read fiction was familiar with the novels of Fielding and Smollett, and lovers of political literature were familiar with the speeches of Burke and the letters of Junius. Everybody read (or could read) the poetical works of Cowper and Burns, Campbell’s *Pleasures of Hope*, and Scott’s *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and whatever else in the shape of verse American publishers thought it worth their while to reprint for them.”—*Life of Irving*.

The publication, in 1809, of *Knickerbocker’s History of New York*, Irving’s first important work, marks the opening of a new era. “It was,” writes Professor Beers, “the first American book, in the higher departments of literature, which needed no apology and stood squarely on its own legs.” Its date is the birth date of American literature.

## VIII.

### WASHINGTON IRVING.

1783-1859.

“The father of American Literature.”

“The first ambassador whom the new world of letters sent to the old.” — *Thackeray*.

**Dutch New York.** — No American city has had a more picturesque history or has undergone a more complete metamorphosis than New York. In 1664, as New Amsterdam, it was a dreamy Dutch village, — its lazy windmills and sleepy streets between houses of antique architecture contrasting strangely with the wild scenery about it. For almost half a century it had been the headquarters of the Dutch in America, and a century of English occupation did not banish the atmosphere of Holland from its limits. As late as the beginning of the present century, the old Dutch burghers were still a prominent element of the population. Often of a summer evening they might be seen sitting in the doorways of their quaint, gabled houses, built a century before of bricks brought from Holland, smoking their long-stemmed pipes in peaceful revery. Their whitewashed dwellings and picturesque windmills were still a prominent feature in the landscape.

**SUGGESTED READING.** — “The Historian,” in *Bracebridge Hall*.



**Life of Irving** (by his nephew, Pierre M. Irving, 1862; by David J. Hill in American Authors Series, 1879; by Charles Dudley Warner in American Men of Letters Series, 1881. See also *Irvingiana*, a collection of various tributes to Irving published soon after his death. For more extended list of authorities see Reference Lists of the Providence Public Library, April, 1883).

In this quaint old city of fast-fading traditions, Washington Irving was born April 3, 1783, the year that witnessed the close of the Revolutionary struggle. He was but five months old when General Washington entered the city just evacuated by the British, and by a happy chance he received the blessing of the great man of whom he was destined to become the chief biographer. Irving's father was English, while his mother was of Scotch descent. They had come to America scarce twenty years before, and with limited means were struggling along with a family of eleven children. School privileges under such circumstances were necessarily limited, but the youthful Irving early acquired a voracious appetite for reading, and within his reach were the volumes of Chaucer and Spenser and Addison, which he well-nigh learned by heart. Throughout his boyhood he was fond of solitary excursions, wandering often, as he tells us in *The Sketch Book*, into surrounding regions, drinking in eagerly the strange tales told by Dutch housewives of the old days, so involved by their drowsy imaginations in mystery and romance.

REQUIRED READING. — "The Author's Account of Himself," and "The Voyage." *The Sketch Book*.

**Salmagundi.** — The condition of Irving's health, always delicate, became in his twenty-first year so alarming to his friends that they sent him to the south of Europe, where he remained for two years. Returning in 1806 completely cured, he resumed for a time the study of law which his European journey had interrupted. But literature appeared to him far more attractive than law. Early the following year his exuberant spirits and teeming literary fancies found vent in a little periodical entitled *Salmagundi, or the Whim-Whams and Opinions of Launcelot Langstaff, Esq., and Others*. The "others" mentioned in the title were Irving's brother William, and his brother-in-law, James K. Paulding. The object of the publication, as stated in the Salutatory, was "simply to instruct the young, reform the old, correct the town, and castigate the age." It was published anonymously, and created much curiosity and interest. It bubbled over with fun, mock seriousness, and whimsical fancies, yet, bright as it was, it gave little promise of an original American literature. The correction of the town meant simply the moulding of it to contemporary London standards, and as far as its individuality is concerned it might have been written by an Englishman in London. After twenty numbers, the young editors tired of their play and the publication ceased.

1804. Napoleon made Emperor of France.

1805. Trafalgar and death of Nelson.

1805. Austerlitz.

1806. Jena.

**SUGGESTED READING.** — The Salutatory, *Salmagundi*, No. 1. For definition see Dictionary. See also E. A. Duyckinck's Introduction to *Salmagundi*, edition of 1860.

**Knickerbocker's History of New York (1809). —**

"Of all mock-heroic works . . . the gayest, the airiest, and the least tiresome." — *Bryant*.

To the youthful editors of *Salmagundi*, with their effervescent spirits, "the town" seemed a huge comedy for their criticism and delight. Nothing escaped them. A popular handbook of New York, written in a dignified, serious style, amused them so immoderately that Irving, with his brother Peter, immediately planned a burlesque of the work, commencing in all seriousness with the creation of the world, and bringing in broad caricatures of the Dutch founders of the city. Anything more serious than an ephemeral parody was not once dreamed of. But Irving soon realized the richness of the material upon which he had stumbled. He found the period of the Dutch supremacy wonderfully full of literary possibilities. It was far enough away in the past to be robed in the haze of romance, and it offered untold opportunities for humorous treatment. The subject grew upon the author, and he carefully elaborated it.

The story of Irving's ingenious hoax, which attributed the authorship of the history to one Diedrich Knickerbocker, an old Dutch gentleman whose disappearance was duly chronicled in the newspapers of the day, is told in the preface of the work. Many were deceived by it; all were curious, and when the work, which had been published in Philadelphia to increase the mystery, appeared, its success was phenomenal. The

descendants of the old Dutch settlers were greatly shocked at its liberties, but every one else was delighted with its boisterous humor. It was republished in England, and was hailed by Campbell and Scott as a real addition to the literature of the world.

The humor of the book is irresistible. "The author makes us laugh," says Bryant, "because he can no more help it than we can help laughing." With such perfect art has it been constructed that it has all the gravity of authentic narration; indeed it is said to have been once gravely quoted by a German editor, Göller, as real history.

REQUIRED READING. — "Account of the Author," in the *History of New York*; also "Wouter Van Twiller," Book III., ch. 1; and "The Manners of our Grandfathers," Book III., ch. 3. See also "The Author's Apology," in edition of 1860.

**1. The Period of Sketches.** — Irving's literary career, which opened with the publication of the *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, may be divided into four distinct periods, corresponding to the four literary themes which at different periods of his life engaged him. The interval between 1809 and 1826 may be characterized as the period of sketches.

1. DUTCH-AMERICAN SKETCHES: *The History of "Rip Van Winkle"* and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," in *The Sketch Book*.

"Dolph Heyliger" in *Bracebridge Hall*.

*Tales of a Traveller*, Part III.

*Wolfert's Roost*. 1855.

2. ENGLISH AND RANDOM SKETCHES:

During the five years following his first successful book Irving was variously engaged, first as editor in Philadelphia of the *Analytic Magazine*, and afterwards, in 1814, as aide-de-camp to Governor Tompkins. The following year, in connection

with the mercantile business of his brothers, he sailed for England, intending to be absent only a few months. His literary fame had preceded him, and he found himself welcomed in the most exclusive literary circles of England. He visited Campbell at Sydenham, and dined with the famous publisher, Murray. In Edinburgh he was the guest of the Scottish critic, Jeffrey, and he passed two delightful days with Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford.

*The Sketch Book.*  
*Bracebridge Hall.*  
*Tales of a Traveller.*  
*The Crayon Miscellany.*  
 1835.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Abbotsford*. See, also, Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, Vol. V.

### The Sketch Book (1819). —

"He colored the shores of the Hudson with the softest hues of legend. The banks at Tarrytown stretching backward to Sleepy Hollow, the broad water of the Tappan Zee, the airy heights of the summer Kaatskill, were mere landscape, pleasing scenery only, until Irving suffused them with the rosy light of story and gave them the human association which is the crowning charm of landscape." — *George William Curtis*.

Irving seems to have regarded the *History of New York* simply as a *jeu d'esprit*, which was in no way an introduction to a literary career, and for nine years he produced very little. But the failure of the mercantile house in which his brothers were large shareholders having left him at the age of thirty-six in London without apparent means of support, he immediately took up his neglected pen. The first number of *The Sketch Book*, which was written in England, was published in America in 1819. It contained six sketches, among which was the immortal "Rip Van Winkle." American critics

hailed the book with extravagant praise. The second and third numbers appeared in rapid succession. Upon the recommendation of Sir Walter Scott, the English publisher Murray was induced to undertake an edition. Its success was instantaneous. The author became the literary "lion" of the day. Lockhart declared in *Blackwood* that "Mr. Washington Irving is one of our first favorites among the English writers of this age, and he is not a bit the less so for being born in America." Byron pronounced *The Broken Heart* "one of the finest things ever written on earth."

*The Sketch Book* contains some of Irving's most dainty work. Four, at least, of the sketches will endure as long as does the language. "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" have made the Highlands of the Hudson classic ground, and have added two distinct characters to the literature of the world. The paper on "Stratford on Avon" has thrown a new spell over the birthplace of Shakespeare, and no one now visits this memory-haunted spot without Irving's work in his satchel. For grace and pensive beauty, the "Westminster Abbey" and "The Angler" are worthy to be compared with the best of Addison or Goldsmith.

REQUIRED READING. — "Rip Van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "Stratford on Avon." See Benson J. Lossing's *The Romance of the Hudson*, Harper's, Vol. LII., p. 643.

**Bracebridge Hall** (1822). — The careful pictures of *The Sketch Book* had thrown a soft, poetic light over English customs and scenes. To Irving the land was enchanted ground. Since his childhood he had dreamed



of it and idealized it. "Having been born and brought up in a new country," he wrote in *Bracebridge Hall*, "yet educated from infancy in the literature of an old one, my mind was early fitted with historical and poetical associations connected with places and manners and customs of Europe; but which could rarely be applied to those of my own country." To Irving England was flooded with the mellow atmosphere of romance. In *Bracebridge Hall* he draws ideal pictures of English country life, of the old-fashioned manor house and its inmates; of the beauty, cheer, and joy of the Yuletide; of St. Mark's eve and May-day; of "the old landmarks of English manners;" of the English country gentleman of the old school. It was the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, from a new standpoint. "Irving rediscovered England;" he opened a new vista; he poured over it the same mellow light with which he had flooded Sleepy Hollow and the dells of the Hudson.

After a winter at Paris and a season at Dresden, in 1824 Irving was paid by Murray £1500 for the manuscript of *The Tales of a Traveller*, but the book was far below its predecessors in interest and in literary merit, and was severely criticised on both sides of the Atlantic.

REQUIRED READING.—"The Author," "The Stout Gentleman," and "May-Day," from *Bracebridge Hall*.

2. **The Period of Spanish Themes (1826-1832).** — In 1826 Irving received a letter from Alexander H. Everett, then United States Minister at Madrid, urging him to come to Spain at once to undertake the translation of

Navarrete's *Voyages of Columbus*, then in press. But when once in Spain amid the abundant materials in the Spanish Archives, Irving abandoned the idea of the translation and immediately began to collect materials for a new life of the great discoverer.

He soon found himself in a wonderland. The period of Spanish history covered by the life of Columbus is full of romance. It resounds with the clash of arms and glitters with the splendor of pageants and the pomp of military display. Few periods have been more filled with stirring incidents. The Moorish splendors of Granada, the expulsion of the Arabs after nearly eight centuries in Spain, the dreamy old Alhambra refurnished for the brilliant court of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Inquisition with its horrors, the discovery of a new world, — all this was crowded into one reign, while back of it stretched the hazy vista of centuries of conflict with the Moors, almost the only records of which are vague traditions and romantic tales, embellished by all the wild extravagance of the Oriental imagination.

REQUIRED READING. — The Preface to *The Conquest of Spain*.

The *Life of Columbus* was but the starting-point of Irving's Spanish investigations. The Moorish chronicles and arabesque legends of Spain were all untold, and to Americans, at least, the Spanish landscape was unfamiliar. So fully did Irving enter into the spirit of this period, and so faithfully did he portray its scenery and events, that he has become a part of the perennial charm that clings to this southern land.

It was Irving's design, as he tells us in the preface to his *Mahomet*, to write a series of works "illustrative of the dominion of the Arabs in Spain," but this purpose he never accomplished. Although each of his seven Spanish books within its limits aims to be exhaustive, there are important historical epochs untouched. The books are, in reality, detached episodes of Spanish history, some of them historically accurate, some of them mere romance. To follow the sequence of events they should be read in the order designated at the margin.

*Mahomet and his Successors.* 1850.

*Legends of the Conquest of Spain.* 1835.

*Moorish Chronicles.* 1833.

*The Conquest of Granada.* 1829.

*The Alhambra.* 1832.

*The Life and Voyages of Columbus.* 1828.

*Spanish Voyages of Discovery.* 1831.

**Mahomet and his Successors**, which is generally regarded as an inferior work, was the last of the series in order of production. It had been projected while Irving was first at Madrid, and had been several times revised and cast aside before its final appearance. The book, which recounts the rise and spread of Mohammedanism up to the eve of the Arab invasion of Spain, closes with the half promise of a history of the Moorish Conquest: "Whether it will ever be our lot to resume this theme, to cross with the Moslem hosts the Strait of Hercules, and narrate their memorable conquest of Gothic Spain, is one of [the] uncertainties of mortal life." The book hinted at was never written. The period is represented only by the *Legends of the Conquest of Spain*, a collection of dim traditions of Don Roderick, "the last of the Goths," and of the sad days that followed his overthrow. The Spaniards were either

annihilated or driven to the mountains. Province after province fell before the Moors. The *Moorish Chronicles* is a record of the campaigns of two kings, Count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile and Fernando III. of Leon, who succeeded for a time in checking the tide of invasion.

### The Conquest of Granada. —

"Nearly eight hundred years were past and gone since the Arabian invaders had sealed the perdition of Spain. . . . Since that disastrous event, kingdom after kingdom had been gradually recovered by the Christian princes, until the single but powerful territory of Granada alone remained under dominion of the Moors." — *Chapter I.*

It was left for the brilliant reign of Ferdinand and Isabella utterly to overthrow the Mohammedan power in Spain. In 1481 the ruler of Granada refused to pay the tribute. Ten years of conflict, as full of heroic achievement and poetic incident as the siege of ancient Troy, were necessary to reduce the Alhambra, the last Moorish stronghold. *The Conquest of Granada* seems like fiction. Although real history, it is a book, as some one has said, that a young lady might read by mistake for a romance.

REQUIRED READING. — "How Queen Isabella arrived in Camp," and "The Surrender of Granada."

### The Alhambra. —

"The beautiful Spanish Sketch Book." — *Prescott.*

"It has the languid beauty of a Moorish song."

"The Alhambra is an ancient fortress or castellated palace of the Moorish kings of Granada, where they held dominion over this their boasted terrestrial paradise, and made their last stand for empire in Spain. . . . It is a Moslem pile in the midst of a Chris-

tian land; an oriental palace amid the Gothic edifices of the West, an elegant memento of a brave, intelligent, and graceful people, who conquered, ruled, and passed away." — *The Alhambra*.

During the summer of 1829, Irving for several weeks took up his residence in this dreamy old palace. He wandered through its halls and courts at all hours of the day and night. He gathered its fast-fading legends and buried himself in its golden atmosphere. *The Alhambra* was the result, a book like the *Arabian Nights*, full of the passion and splendor of the Orient. In many respects it is the best of Irving's Spanish works.

REQUIRED READING. — "The Palace of the Alhambra," "Moonlight on the Alhambra," and "The Legend of the Rose of the Alhambra."

**The Life and Voyages of Columbus**, a book upon which Irving expended the unrelenting labor of months, is the most serious and weighty of all the author's works on Spanish themes. It has taken its place as the standard English biography of Columbus, a position that it will doubtless always retain. Other and more scholarly works have been written and Irving's estimate of the discoverer has been sharply criticised, but the book will never lose its hold on the great mass of English readers. The *Spanish Voyages of Discovery* is but a sequel to the *Life of Columbus*, recounting the steps taken by Spain to gain her American possessions.

REQUIRED READING. — "The Discovery of Land."

**3. The Period of Western American Themes (1832–1846).** — In 1829 Irving was called from Spain to become

the American Secretary of Legation at London, an office which he held with credit for three years. In 1832, after an absence of seventeen years, he returned to America, where he was received with almost national honors. So rapidly had his country developed that he was a stranger amid the scenes of his childhood. He scarcely recognized his native city. He was like his own Rip Van Winkle. A new life and a new spirit seemed to animate everything. The vast territory to the westward that had been *terra incognita* in his boy-

hood was now being rapidly filled by the tide of immigration. The frontier line was now beyond the Mississippi, and it was fast pushing westward. He was filled with a desire to acquaint himself with his native land which he had so long neglected. He "had a great curiosity," as he expressed it, to know and see the wild life of the West, and accordingly he at once, with several companions, made a journey among the Indian agencies from St. Louis up the banks of the Missouri.

*A Tour of the  
Prairies.* 1835.  
*Astoria.* 1836.  
*Captain Bonne-  
ville.* 1837.

SUGGESTED READING. — For Irving's feelings upon his return to America, see the Introduction to *A Tour of the Prairies*.

*A Tour of the Prairies*, which was the literary result of this journey, is the record of a month's expedition from Fort Gibson up the Arkansas to near the present boundary of Kansas. Giving, as it does, a faithful picture of the West of that day, it is a valuable addition to the all too scanty records of a picturesque era in our history. Edward Everett, in a review of the book, wrote:



"It is a sort of sentimental journey, a romantic excursion, in which nearly all the elements of several different kinds of writing are beautifully and gayly blended into a production almost *sui generis*. . . . We thank him for turning these poor barbarous *steppes* into classical land, and joining his inspiration to that of Cooper in breathing life and fire into a circle of imagery which was not known before to exist, for the purposes of the imagination."

This book was followed the next year by *Astoria*, a history of the fur-trading settlement at the mouth of the Columbia River, written at the request of John Jacob Astor. In this work Irving was assisted by his nephew, Pierre M. Irving, who relieved the author of much of the drudgery of collecting materials.

It was while engaged in this book that Irving met at the house of Mr. Astor a noted soldier and hunter, in whose stories he became intensely interested. The outcome of this chance meeting was *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, a book of thrilling adventure among Indians and wild beasts in the Rocky Mountains, with accurate pictures of the frontier life of those early days.

SUGGESTED READING.—The Introductions to *Astoria* and *Captain Bonneville*.

4. **The Period of Biographical Work (1846–1859).**—In 1842 Irving was appointed Minister to Spain, and upon his return in 1846 he settled down in his rural home at "Sunnyside" on the Hudson to spend the last years of his life. The surroundings and the traditions of the old Dutch mansion which Irving remodelled into a sort of American "Abbotsford," were given to the world in 1855, in the volume *Wolfert's Roost*. Here

Irving produced three biographies. The *Mahomet* has been already mentioned. In 1849 he published the *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, the most charming of all his biographies, and probably the best study ever written of the thriftless, lovable poet.

But the book which Irving wished to be the crowning work of his life was *The Life of Washington*. Upon it he expended the most faithful labor, pushing so thoroughly his investigations that few additional facts of importance in the life of the great leader have since been discovered. The work was done under great difficulties. Old age was creeping upon the author. Toward the last the work dragged painfully, and the fifth and last volume appeared only a short time before the author's death. The chief charms of the book are its clear and beautiful style, and its bright, breezy descriptions. Although not a biography of the very highest rank, it is in every way worthy of its position as the standard life of a remarkable man and the crowning work of a brilliant literary career.

**Irving's Style.** — (Richardson, I., 278–280; Whipple's *American Literature*; Warner's *Life of Irving*; Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*.) Though gifted with moderate power to create plots and characters, Irving was pre-eminently a story-teller. He was quick to detect the literary possibilities in seemingly unpromising material, and he could make much from very little, as in his "Stout Gentleman." His canvas was never a broad one. Even his longest histories are but aggregations of brilliantly told episodes. He delighted

in gentle themes, in the Indian Summer days of the past. From all his work breathes his sweet, gentle nature. His English is pure and elegant; his sentences, each of sparkling clearness, ripple past like the music of a summer brook. His humor, at first lawless and boisterous, then more subdued and delicate in his later works, is everywhere present, but is wholly without bitterness.

### His Character. —

"He . . . was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet and socially the equal of the most refined Europeans. . . . In America the love and regard for Irving was a national sentiment. It seemed to me during a year's travel in the country, as if no one ever aimed a blow at Irving. All men held their hands from that harmless, friendly peacemaker. . . . The gate of his own little charming domain on the beautiful Hudson River was forever swinging before visitors who came to him. . . . He had loved once in his life. The lady he loved died; and he whom all the world loved never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not the very cheerfulness of his after life add to the pathos of that untold story?" — *William Makepeace Thackeray*.

Irving died at "Sunnyside," Nov. 28, 1859, and was buried on a beautiful Indian Summer day, near the Sleepy Hollow which he had made immortal.

REQUIRED READING. — Longfellow's "In the Churchyard at Tarrytown," Lowell's "Fable for Critics."

JAMES KIRKE PAULDING (1779-1860).

**Life** (*Literary Life of J. K. Paulding*, by his son, William Irving Paulding. See also Irving's *Life of Irving*).

Closely associated with the name of Washington Irving is that of his brother-in-law and early literary partner, James K. Paulding. Although the early work of these authors, as seen in *Salmagundi*, was almost identical in style and spirit, and although their choice of literary themes shows many striking coincidences, there was, nevertheless, little similarity between the two. Unlike Irving, Paulding never outgrew *Salmagundi*. His humor is always boisterous, never chaste and sensitive. Often it is crude and caustic, leaving behind it a rankling wound. The artistic sense, the delicate touch, the tender sympathy which made "Rip Van Winkle" immortal, are too often lacking in *The Dutchman's Fireside*, and, in spite of its humor and its pathos, the book is forgotten.

Paulding's life was one of ceaseless activity. His published volumes, which number almost as many as Irving's, consist of novels, short stories, sketches, satires, parodies, burlesques, political works, poems, and an excellent *Life of George Washington*. Like Irving, he delighted in broad pictures of the old Dutch settlers. In some of his sketches his humor is as rollicking and as uncontrolled as Irving's in *The History of New York*. His *Lay of the Scottish Fiddle* (1813), a clever parody of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), then at the height of its popularity, and his novel *Koningsmarke* (1823), a burlesque upon the Indian of Cooper's novel *The Pioneers*, are characteristic productions.

*The Dutchman's Fireside.* 1831.

*Westward Ho!* 1832.

*Life of Washington.* 1835.

*The Old Continental.* 1846.

*The Puritan and his Daughter.* 1849.

Paulding's best work is his novel *The Dutchman's Fireside*.

"It is a genuine, life-like story, full of stirring incidents, of picturesque scenes, and striking characters, for which the author's early experiences had furnished the abundant materials. The amiable and whimsical peculiarities of the Dutch settlers, the darker tints of Indian character, and the vicissitudes of frontier life, have rarely been more powerfully sketched." — *Underwood*.

The descriptions of natural scenery are drawn with loving care. The author wields a poet's pen when he writes of the springtime, the pathless woods, and the sparkling Hudson.

During the administration of Van Buren, Paulding was Secretary of the Navy. His political views are well known. In all things intensely conservative, he defended even slavery, strengthening his position by publishing, in 1836, a treatise entitled *Slavery in the United States*.

SUGGESTED READING. — *The Dutchman's Fireside*.

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS (1806–1867).

"No other American author has represented with equal vivacity and truth the manners of the age." — *Thackeray*.

**Life** (by Henry A. Beers, in American Men of Letters Series. See also Goodrich's *Recollections of a Lifetime*. The collected writings of Willis have been issued, in thirteen volumes, by the Scribners).

Though of New England parentage, born in Portland, Maine, only one year before Longfellow, and receiving his edu-

*Poems.*  
*Pencillings by the Way.*  
*Letters from Under a Bridge.*  
*People I Have Met.*  
*Paul Fane, a novel.*

cation at Yale College, Willis belongs with "The Knickerbockers," that little group of writers that for a long time made New York the literary capital of America. Few authors ever started in life with greater promise. While yet an undergraduate at Yale he achieved a widespread literary fame with the series of Scripture poems, which, in spite of Lowell's joke about "inspiration and water," are their author's best claim to remembrance as a poet. From this time until the rise of Longfellow and the New England writers, he enjoyed the distinction of being the most popular American poet.

Encouraged by his poetic successes, Willis, after leaving college, went to New York, where, in 1828, he became, with George P. Morris, the song writer, associate editor of *The New York Mirror*. Two years later, with five hundred dollars in his pocket and the promise of ten dollars for every letter he might write to *The Mirror*, Willis, then in his twenty-fourth year, started for Europe. In Paris he became for a time an *attaché* to the American Legation, an honor which was of great service, since it admitted him freely to the best society of the capital. After a prolonged journey through Southern Europe, Turkey, and parts of Asia Minor, he returned to London, where, in 1835, he republished his letters to *The Mirror* in a three volume edition under the title *Pencillings by the Way*. The popularity of the book was immediate. Although its personalities made many bitter enemies, it was on the whole extravagantly praised on both sides of the Atlantic.



"At this day it has something of the interest of a histrionic performance, which is highly comic to one who has been behind the scenes. Here was a young American, rubbing along through Europe on the slenderest resources, eking out his weekly revenue by an occasional poem or story, but always in mortal fear of coming to the bottom of his purse, and all the time he wrote in the tone and style of a young prince, conveying the impression that castles and palaces, chariots and horses, and all the splendors of aristocratic life, were just as familiar to him as the air he breathed.

. . . He saw the outside of its gay and splendid life, and this he described in his *Pencillings*, with a vividness and grace which have rarely been equalled. . . . He was under a spell which blinded him to the true nature of what he looked upon and caused him to give a report of it which has misled in some degree the American people ever since." — *James Parton*.

Willis returned to America in 1837, and, with his wife, whom he had married in England, lived for several years at "Glenmary" on the Susquehanna near Owego, New York. In 1846, after establishing with Morris *The Home Journal*, a graceful society paper, having disposed of his Owego home, he settled down to pass the rest of his life at his quiet country residence "Idlewild," on the Hudson. During his last years his powers were much impaired by an incurable malady, which rendered imperative frequent trips to milder climates, but this did not stop his tireless literary production.

**His Literary Style.** — (Lowell's *Fable for Critics*; Poe's *Literati*; Beers' *Life of Willis*; Richardson, II.; Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, I.; Tuckerman's *American Literature*.) The publications of N. P. Willis, which number nearly thirty titles, cover an exceedingly wide literary range. They include books of travel, journals, letters, sketches, dramas, poetry, biography,

criticism, ephemeral jottings, and one novel. The greater number of his books are collections of miscellaneous contributions to *The Journal* and other magazines.

In the words of George Ticknor Curtis, Willis was the master of "a marvellously easy, graceful, half-flippant and wholly enjoyable style of prose writing." Poe declared that "as a writer of sketches, properly called, Mr. Willis is unequalled. Sketches, especially of society, are his forte." The word "jaunty" has been overworked in connection with Willis, yet no word sums up more completely his personality. His greatest literary faults are his tendencies to over ornament and his fondness for superficial glitter.

"His prose has a natural grace of its own  
And enough of it too, if he'd let it alone;  
But he twitches and jerks so, one fairly gets tired  
And is forced to forgive where one might have admired;  
Yet whenever it slips away free and unlaced  
It runs like a stream with a musical waste,  
And gurgles along with the liquidest sweep—  
'Tis not deep as a river, but who'd have it deep?"

— *A Fable for Critics.*

His poems, written in smooth blank verse, are simple and impressive, often pathetic. The most popular of his Scriptural poems was "Absalom"; the best of his secular poems are "Unseen Spirits," greatly admired by Poe, and the "Belfry Pigeon."

Although nearly all of his writings were of an ephemeral nature, no author ever wrote with more painstaking care than Willis.

“He bestowed upon everything he did, even upon slight and transient paragraphs, the most careful labor, making endless erasures and emendations. On an average he erased one line out of every three that he wrote, and on one page of his editorial writing there were but three lines left unaltered.” — *James Parton*.

The author's best work is contained in *Pencillings by the Way* and in the thoughtful *Letters from Under a Bridge*, so highly praised by Lowell. It was Willis' father, the Rev. Nathaniel Willis, who, in 1827, established in Boston the well-known *Youth's Companion*.

REQUIRED READING. — “Unseen Spirits,” “The Widow of Nain.” Selections from *Pencillings by the Way*.

## IX.

### THE NOVELISTS.

**The Perspective of American History.** — Although in England the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century was marked by the appearance of a most brilliant school of novelists, in America the six romances of Charles Brockden Brown continued to stand alone as representatives of our imaginative prose. The treatment by British critics of American books had been little short of brutal. A deadly provincialism and a firmly fixed idea that America was barren of possibilities of romance, had put a bann on all attempts at fiction. It was not until the century was in its third decade that a discovery was made that rendered a distinctively American novel possible. This discovery, which, once pointed out, was obvious enough, was simply the fact that our Colonial and Revolutionary periods seem much farther away than they really are. In the words of Cooper:

“When the mind reverts to the earliest days of Colonial history, the period seems remote and obscure, the thousand changes that thicken along the links of recollections, throwing back the origin of the Nation to a day so distant as seemingly to reach the mists of time, and yet four lives of ordinary duration would suffice to

transmit from mouth to mouth, in the form of tradition, all that civilized man has achieved within the limits of the Republic." — *The Pathfinder*.

It is this fact alone that has rendered a distinctively American novel possible. Without this even Hawthorne would have been driven to seek foreign themes.

Although Cooper was not the first to recognize this possibility for American romance, he was, nevertheless, the first completely to demonstrate it to the world. After he had produced *The Spy*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Pilot*, there was no one who did not realize that a vast empire full of untold possibilities had been added to the realm of fiction.

#### JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1789–1851).

"The first American author to carry our flag outside the limits of our language." — *Brander Matthews*.

**Life** (in consequence of Cooper's dying request to his family, no authorized biography has ever been attempted. T. R. Lounsbury's admirable study of Cooper in the American Men of Letters Series is, however, a scholarly and accurate summing up of his life-work and character. The introductions contributed by the author's daughter, Susan Fenimore Cooper, to the "Sea Tales," and "Leather-Stocking Tales"; *A Glance Backward* by the same writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* for February, 1887, and T. S. Livermore's *History of Cooperstown*, contain much valuable information).

Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey, Sept. 15, 1789.

"In 1785 the author's father, who had extensive tracts of land in this wilderness [about Oswego Lake, New York], arrived with a party of surveyors. . . . At the commencement of the following year the settlement began. . . . The author was brought an infant into this valley [Nov. 10, 1790] and all his first impressions were here obtained." — *Introduction to The Pioneers*.

The Cooperstown of this early day can easily be pictured after reading *The Pioneers*, which, although fictitious in its events and characters, is a minute and loving study of the surroundings of its author's boyhood. The wild beauty of the forest-bound lake, the vast forest stretching for leagues into the unknown, mysterious west, the picturesque frontier population, the vanishing Indian, the still-abundant wild game,—all these made deep impressions upon the susceptible mind of the boy.

In 1802, when a mere lad of thirteen, Cooper was sent to Yale College. Three years later, with his father's consent, he left college to go to sea. His ambition was to join the navy, but since practical seamanship was demanded as a prerequisite, he immediately shipped in a merchant vessel before the mast. A rough voyage of a year's duration followed, to London and Cowes, on the Mediterranean, and back again to New York. He then enlisted in the United States Navy, where he served with credit for nearly three years. In 1811 his marriage, which was a most happy one, closed the first period of his life. His literary career, which now opened, may be divided into four distinct periods.



1. *The First Creative Period* (1820–1830).

The story of Cooper's first novel has been often told. He had been reading one of the cheap English novels of the time, when, throwing it down in disgust, he remarked to his wife that he could write a better one himself. The result was *Precaution*, a wretchedly dull novel of English society life. Its failure was an inevitable one, for its author was writing on a subject of which he knew absolutely nothing. But his friends were quick to see that in those parts where he described familiar scenes he showed remarkable promise. He was urged to try again with a familiar subject. Accordingly, in 1821, he finished *The Spy*, a work of the first rank. Never was a novel hailed with more enthusiasm. England, as well as America, was delighted, and Cooper's fame was secure. *The Spy* was followed the next year by *The Pioneers*, the first of the Leather-Stocking series.

*Precaution.*  
*The Spy.*  
*The Pioneers.*  
*The Pilot.*  
*Lionel Lincoln.*  
*The Last of the Mohicans.*  
*The Prairie.*  
*The Red Rover.*  
*The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish.*  
*The Water-Witch.*

The anonymous author of *Waverley* had produced in 1821 *The Pirate*, a novel whose scenes are laid partly on the sea. At a dinner in New York, in 1822, the company was nearly agreed that the unknown author of the series, to describe nautical things so accurately, must have been at some time in his life a sailor. As Scott, whose name had been guessed by some in connection with the *Waverley* series, had never been to sea, the conclusion was therefore inevitable. Cooper,

speaking from the knowledge of a practical sailor, declared that the book furnished abundant signs of being written by a landsman. To prove his assertion he proposed himself to write a nautical novel. The result was *The Pilot*, the first novel of the sea, a book which opened up a vast literary field before unknown. Cooper, now fairly embarked on the sea of literature, continued to write novel after novel at the rate of one a year.

When, in June, 1826, Cooper sailed with his family for Europe, his popularity had reached its highest point. He was everywhere in Europe and America hailed as the "American Scott."

## 2. *The Period of Controversy* (1830-1840).

"Here's Cooper who's written six volumes to show  
He's as good as a lord." — *Lowell*.

(See Greeley's *Recollections of a Busy Life*, and Par-ton's *Life of Greeley*, Ch. XVIII.) Commencing in 1830 Cooper entered upon a bitter decade of controversy, during which he produced no novels worthy of the name.

To understand fully the position in which the novelist soon found himself, one should study the character

<i>The Bravo.</i>	of the man. Intensely proud, positive
<i>The Heiden-</i>	and uncompromising in his convictions,
<i>maur.</i>	
<i>The Headsman.</i>	he could brook no criticism or opposition.
<i>The Monikins.</i>	Added to this, he was intensely patriotic.
<i>Homeward</i>	Few men have ever loved their native land
<i>Bound.</i>	
<i>Home as Found.</i>	more than he. In Europe he naturally
<i>History of the</i>	found that his views concerning America
<i>Navy.</i>	

were not the prevailing ones. The patronizing airs of the English galled him. He found things on every hand in the governments and customs of Europe to criticise and condemn.

His next novels, *The Bravo*, *The Heidenmaur*, and *The Headsman*, all deal with European scenes. Two of them, laid respectively in the aristocratic cities of Berne and of Venice, are bitter attacks on European society. The story is lost in a mass of arguments and denunciation. He exalts republican institutions; he assails everything European and tries to apply American principles everywhere. The results were far from what he expected. The American press, so far from sympathizing with him, rather criticised his position,—a fact which exasperated him almost beyond bounds. It was at this time that he published in rapid succession ten volumes of European travels and *The Monikins*, the most bitter and unreasonable of novels.

In November, 1833, Cooper arrived in New York after an absence of seven years. His experience with the American press had embittered him against his countrymen. His long residence abroad had changed his views so that he soon began to criticise unsparingly American customs. *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found* are caustic sermons to the American people. Naturally he was assailed in turn. The press all over the land attacked and ridiculed him. His *History of the Navy*, which is really as fine a thing in its line as was ever written, was bitterly criticised for its alleged unfairness. Cooper knew no retreat. He began a

stubborn and heroic fight with the whole American people. He prosecuted suit after suit against some of the leading papers of America for libel, at one time having on hand as many as twenty suits with different journals. In these he was usually victorious, but the victories were without spoils or glory.

### 3. *Second Creative Period* (1840–1846).

During the six years following the publication of the *The Pathfinder*. *History of the Navy*, Cooper produced his strongest work. *The Pathfinder* and *The Mercedes of Castile*. *Deerslayer*. *Deerslayer*, the crowning creations of his genius, appeared in 1840 and 1841 respectively. *Mercedes of Castile*, the story of the memorable voyage of Columbus, is not without value; *Wyandotte*, a tedious tale of the Revolution, full of religious speculations, is a satire on the Puritans; while the last four are tales of early New York history full of life and interest.

### 4. *Period of Decline* (1846–1850).

“Cooper’s fame would not have been a whit lessened, if every line he wrote after *The Chainbearer* had never seen the light.” — *Lounsbury*.

These novels are mere reproductions of what he had done much better before; they are full of fierce ill-nature and trite lectures to his countrymen. *The Redskins*. *Jack Tier*. *The Crater*. *Oak Openings*. *The Sea Lions*, a tale of

the Antarctic Ocean, is excellent while it keeps on the water. His last book, *Ways of the Hour*, is an attack on the American jury system.

After a most liberal selection, only fifteen of Cooper's thirty-two novels are worthy of study. These may be divided into three groups.

### I. THE LEATHER-STOCKING TALES.

"A drama in five acts."

"If anything from the pen of the author is at all to outlive himself, it is unquestionably the series of the Leather-Stocking Tales." — *Cooper*.

"Leather-Stocking is one of the few original characters, perhaps the only great original character that American fiction has added to the literature of the world." — *Lounsbury*.

(See Introduction to the Leather-Stocking Tales, and the Introductions to each of the five novels; see also *A Fable for Critics* and Brander Matthews' *Americanisms and Briticisms*.)

"The order in which the several books appeared was essentially different from that in which they would have been presented to the world had the regular course of their incidents been consulted. In *The Pioneers*, the first of the series written, the Leather-Stocking is represented as already old, and driven from his early haunts in the forest by the sound of the axe and the smoke of the settler. *The Last of the Mohicans*, the next book in the order of publication, carried the reader back to a much earlier period in the history of our hero, representing him as middle-aged and in the fullest vigor of manhood. In *The Prairie* his career terminates, and he is laid in his grave. There it was originally the intention to leave him, . . . but a latent regard for this character induced the author to resuscitate him in *The Pathfinder*, a book that was not long after succeeded by *The Deerslayer*, thus completing the series. While the five books . . . were originally published in the order just mentioned, that of the incidents, inso-

*The Sea Lions.*  
*Ways of the*  
*Hour.*

*The Deerslayer.*  
*The Last of the*  
*Mohicans.*  
*The Pathfinder.*  
*The Pioneers.*  
*The Prairie.*

much as they are connected with the career of their principal character, is . . . very different. Taking the life of the Leather-Stocking as a guide, *The Deerslayer* should have been the opening book, for in that work he is seen just merging into manhood; to be succeeded by *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, and *The Prairie*." — *Author's Introduction*.

It will aid the memory to note that this is also the alphabetical order.

There is little doubt that the world's idea of the Indian has been gained from the Leather-Stocking Tales, and that the Indian as painted by Cooper will be the Indian of literature for all time. Whether Chingachgook, Uncas, and Hist were true to nature in every respect may be open to doubt, but this matters but little.

"It is the privilege of all writers of fiction, more particularly when their works aspire to the elevation of romance, to present the beau-ideal of their character to the reader. This it is which constitutes poetry, and to suppose that the red man is to be represented only in the squalid misery, or in the degraded moral state that certainly more or less belongs to his condition, is, we apprehend, taking a very narrow view of an author's privileges. Such criticism would have deprived the world of even Homer." — *Introduction to Leather-Stocking Tales*.

REQUIRED READING. — *The Pioneers*, Ch. III. and Ch. XXXIII.; *The Last of the Mohicans*, Ch. XVIII. and Ch. XXX.; *The Deerslayer*, Ch. XVI.; *The Pathfinder*, Ch. I.; *The Prairie*, Ch. XXXIV.

## II. TALES OF THE SEA.

"No writer has ever rivalled him in his wonderful pictures of swift vessels riding before the wind, chasing each other, sinking each other in mad contests in the midst of the tempest or dancing on the summer waves. His ships are drawn with the accuracy of a Flemish artist." — *Eugene Lawrence*.



Cooper added the ocean as well as the forest to the realm of literature. It is hard in these days, when novels of the sea fairly flood the market, to realize that the origin of this kind of literature was so recent. Captain Marryat, Clark Russell, and all the hosts of novelists who have composed sea-stories are but disciples of Cooper.

*The Pilot* is doubtless the best of all Cooper's sea-stories. In it is delineated the immortal Long Tom Coffin of Nantucket, one of the finest of Cooper's creations. The story of the breathless chase of the American frigate down the British Channel followed by the whole English fleet, the wreck of the *Ariel*, and the death of Long Tom have few superiors in our language, in the field of graphic description. The plot of the novel is laid in Revolutionary times and the "Pilot" turns out to be the famous seaman, Paul Jones. *The Two Admirals* deals with the British navy of American Colonial times, and *Wing and Wing* is a story of the Mediterranean and the adventures of a French privateer.

*The Pilot.*  
*The Red Rover.*  
*The Water-Witch.*  
*The Two Admirals.*  
*Wing and Wing.*

REQUIRED READING. — *The Pilot*. If only a part can be read, Ch. XXXII.

### III. TALES OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY.

The wonderful success that greeted Cooper's first real novel, *The Spy*, was richly deserved, for the book contains some of his strongest work. It is a story of the Revolution, and its leading character, Harvey Birch, ranks with Natty Bumppo and Long Tom Coffin.

*Lionel Lincoln, or the Leaguer of Boston* is famous for its graphic description of the engagement at Concord, the running fight to Boston, and the battle of Bunker Hill. Bancroft, the historian, once declared that the last was the best account of the battle ever written. *Miles Wallingford*, *Afloat and Ashore*, and *Satanstoe* are descriptions of early Colonial life in New York, the first two being partly autobiographical. The last is a powerful novel fully equal to some of the Leather-Stocking series.

REQUIRED READING.—*The Spy*, Chs. XXXIII., XXXIV.; *Lionel Lincoln*, describing the battles of Concord and of Bunker Hill.

**Cooper's Style.** — (Richardson, II. 287–329; Brander Matthews' *Americanisms and Briticisms*. See also *The Fable for Critics*.) Cooper wrote rapidly and carelessly, seldom correcting his first manuscript dashed off in the heat of composition. As a result, the faults of his style are very glaring. His words are ill-chosen, his English often slovenly in the extreme. Many of his novels are without unity of plot and action, running on and on like the tale of a garrulous story-teller. He seems to have had little idea of what the next chapter of his novel was to contain; he often introduces new characters near the end of the book; and sometimes he drags in strange and utterly unnecessary scenes with no apparent reason whatever. His dialogues are far from natural; his characters act often without sufficient motive; many of his tales are sadly untrue to human

nature; and the lectures and sermons dragged into his novels are just so much dead weight. In addition to all this his "females" are shrinking, trembling creatures, without individuality or life, and his juveniles are insipid to the last degree. As Lowell remarked:

"The women he draws, from one model don't vary,  
All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie."

But even these faults, grave as they are, — faults that would condemn a lesser writer to oblivion, — may be overlooked when we sum up Cooper's excellencies. Where he was great was in the portrayal of action and the rush of incident. In narrative power he has never had a superior. In his battle scenes and his description of storm and wreck one is carried headlong with the narrative. The scene actually lives again and one leaves the book with a sense almost of personal participation in the stirring events recorded there. He had an enthusiasm, elevated and genuine, for wild nature. His pictures of the pathless forest, the solitary lake, the vast and lonely reaches of the prairie, are above criticism. Not only did he add a new field to literature, but a new character, — perhaps the only one that America has given to fiction.

"He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,  
One wild flower he's plucked that is wet with the dew  
Of this fresh western world." — *Lowell*.

(For an extreme picture of Cooper's faults, see *North American Review*, July, 1895.)

**Cooper's Character**, owing to his unfortunate quarrel with his countrymen and the fact that, until recently,

no life of him was published, has been greatly misunderstood. It is probable that no author of equal powers was ever personally more unpopular during his life. But, like Swift, Cooper always presented his worst side to the world. He was too proud to beg for sympathy though he knew that his countrymen had misjudged him. He chose rather to fight on alone without truce or quarter, even if it were with the whole world.

“As for myself I can safely say that in scarce a circumstance of my life, that has brought me the least under the cognizance of the public, have I ever been judged justly. In various instances have I been praised for acts that were either totally without any merit, or at least the particular merit imputed to them; while I have been even persecuted for deeds that deserved praise.” — *Miles Wallingford*.

As a matter of fact, no man was ever kinder or more sympathetic than he. His family life was almost perfect in its happiness. As to his other characteristics, he possessed, in the words of his biographer, “first, a sturdy, hearty, robust, out-door and open-air wholesomeness devoid of any trace of offence and free from all morbid taint; and, secondly, an intense Americanism, — ingrained, abiding, and dominant.”

**His Cosmopolitan Fame.** — “Franklin was the earliest American who had fame among foreigners; but his wide popularity was due rather to his achievements as a philosopher, as a physicist, as a statesman, than to his labors as an author. Irving was six years older than Cooper, and his reputation was as high in England as at home; yet to this day he is little more than a name to those who do not speak our mother tongue. But after Cooper had published *The Spy*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Pilot*, his popularity

was cosmopolitan; he was almost as widely read in France, in Germany, and in Italy as in Great Britain and the United States. Only one American book has ever attained the international success of these of Cooper's — *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and only one American author has since gained a name at all commensurate with Cooper's abroad — Poe. . . . With Goethe and Schiller, with Scott and Byron, Cooper was one of the foreign forces which brought about the Romanticist revolt in France, profoundly affecting the literature of all Latin countries. Dumas owed almost as much to Cooper as he did to Scott; and Balzac said that if Cooper had only drawn character as well as he painted the phenomena of nature, he would have uttered the last word of our art." — *Brander Matthews*.

CATHERINE MARIA SEDGWICK (1789–1867).

**Life** (by Mary E. Dewey, 1870. See Prescott's *Miscellanies*; Poe's *Literati*).

Born the same year as Cooper and publishing her first novel, *A New England Tale*, one year after the appearance of *The Sketch Book* and *The Spy*, Miss Sedgwick was the first American woman to achieve substantial success as a novelist. SUSANNA ROWSON, with her tearful, sentimental *Charlotte Temple*; TABITHA TENNEY, and others had achieved only a passing fame. When, in 1824, *Redwood* appeared, it was immediately translated into four European languages, the French translator even attributing the novel to Cooper. Of the novels written by Miss Sedgwick, all of them dealing with New England life, *Hope Leslie, or Early Times in Massachusetts* (1827) and *The Linwoods, or Sixty Years Since in America* (1835) are undoubtedly the best. Aside from her six novels, she produced nearly twenty volumes, consisting of collected tales and sketches contributed to

magazines and annuals, biographies, letters, sketches of travel, juveniles, and essays critical and moralizing. She contributed "Le Bossu" to the *Tales of the Glauber Spa* (1832), a series edited by Robert C. Sands and contributed to by Bryant, Paulding, and William Legget.

Although the day of the leisurely two-volume novel has nearly passed, Miss Sedgwick's novels are still readable. Her greatest defect is the sermonizing tendency of her day, which filled her novels with diffuse and tedious pages. Her excellencies are the quiet, truthful pictures of her native Massachusetts home life.

#### JOHN NEAL (1793-1876).

"John Neal's forces are multitudinous and fire briskly at everything. They occupy all the province of letters and are nearly useless from being spread over too much ground." — *Whipple*.

**Life** (Neal's *Wandering Recollections of a Lifetime*, 1869; Lowell's *Fable for Critics*; Poe's *Marginalia*, cxxviii.). Surely Nature never committed a greater blunder than in sending the impetuous, worldly John Neal into the quiet Quaker family at Portland, Maine. But the mistake was soon rectified, the young fellow being early read out of the society "for knocking," as he says, "a man head over heels, for writing a tragedy, for paying a military fine, and for desiring to be turned out whether or no." After a wandering career he at length settled down in Baltimore, where he formed a commercial partnership with the poet Pierpont, but the firm failing soon after, he applied himself to law. His first novel, *Keep Cool*, appeared in 1817, and from



this time until his death he continued to pour out a flood of literary matter. In his own words his publications "would amount to a hundred octavo volumes at least, on subjects far too numerous to mention." He was connected with many papers and magazines both in America and England.

Although Poe, echoing perhaps the sentiment of his time, was "inclined to rank John Neal as, at all events, second among our men of indisputable genius," time has shown the falsity of this estimate. As a poet, Neal has here and there fine passages, but these could not save *The Battle of Niagara* and other poetical efforts from oblivion. As a novelist of American life, he antedated Cooper several years. His best novels are *Logan* (1821), *Seventy-Six*, a tale of the Revolution (1822), *Randolph* (1822), *Rachel Dyer*, a tale of the Salem witches (1828), *The Down-Easters*, and *Ruth Elder*. Neal wrote with extreme rapidity, none of his works occupying him more than a month.

REQUIRED READING. — *The Fable for Critics*. (Neal.)

JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY (1795–1870).

**Life** (by Henry T. Tuckerman; *Tribute to the Memory of Kennedy*, by R. C. Winthrop, 1870). During the fifteen years between 1838 and 1853, among others who held the office of Secretary of the Navy, were the American authors, Paulding, Bancroft, and Kennedy. The last, a native of Baltimore, a lawyer and a statesman with a long and honorable record, is known in literature chiefly

through his three charming novels of American life, — *Swallow Barn, a Story of Rural Life in Virginia* (1832), *Horse-shoe Robinson, a Tale of the Tory Ascendancy* (1835), and *Rob of the Bowl* (1838), a story describing the province of Maryland under the second Lord Baltimore. The first, a quiet, simple tale of the old days in Virginia, is its author's best work. The fourth chapter of the second volume of Thackeray's novel, *The Virginians*, owes its wonderful accuracy of description to the fact that it was written by Kennedy.

**Robert Montgomery Bird** (1803–1854), a native of Delaware, was educated for the medical profession, but soon turned to literature. He first composed three tragedies, the first of which, *The Gladiator*, a powerful composition, was widely popular, even becoming a favorite with Edwin Forrest. Next appeared two novels, *Calavar, a Tale of the Conquest of Mexico* (1834), and *The Infidel, or the Fall of Mexico* (1835).

“The author has studied with great care the costume, manners, and military usages of the natives and has done for them what Cooper has done for the wild tribes of the North — touched their rude features with the bright colors of a poetic fancy.” — *Prescott*.

Bird's last literary work was a series of novels dealing with American frontier life, full of startling adventures and dramatic situations. Among these the best known are *The Hawks of Hawk Hollow*, and *Nick of the Woods, or the Jibbenainosay*, a tragic story of Kentucky frontier life. For a review of the former see Poe's works, Vol. VI., 205. These stories of adventure, which have been widely imitated, are without doubt the parent of the modern dime novel.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS (1806-1870).

**Life** (by William P. Trent, in American Men of Letters Series). The first novelist of the South, both as to time and rank, was a native of Charleston, South Carolina. As so many other American authors have done, he commenced life as a law student, being admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-two. After a year he turned to journalism, and very soon he began the literary labors which in time made him the most voluminous and versatile of American authors. Besides producing as many novels as did Cooper, he wrote the standard *History of South Carolina*, and the lives of Generals Marion and Greene, Captain John Smith, and the Chevalier Bayard. He was also the author of some fourteen volumes of poems; he edited several of Shakespeare's plays, and contributed numerous articles to the periodicals. His published works number over sixty titles.

The best of Simms' novels may be divided into three groups. COLONIAL ROMANCE: *The Yemassee* (1835) and *The Cassique of Kiawah*; REVOLUTIONARY ROMANCE: *The Partisan*, a tale of Marion's men, *Mellichampe*, *The Scout*, *Katherine Walton*, *The Forayers*, *Eutaw*, and *Woodcraft*; and BORDER ROMANCE: *Guy Rivers*, *Richard Hurdis*, *Border Beagles*, *Confession*, *Beauchampe*, and *Charlemont*.

Although Poe, with characteristic partiality, declared that Simms, aside from Brockden Brown, Hawthorne, and Cooper, was "immeasurably the best writer of fiction in America," the books of this novelist are lit-

tle read at the present day. His novels lack artistic finish and symmetrical design. All the worst defects of Cooper's work are to be found in them. He wrote too rapidly, and though at times he succeeded in vividly and vigorously painting action and landscape, the defects so far outweigh the beauties that few have patience to read more than one of his creations.

**Herman Melville** (1819-1891), a native of New York City, made in his eighteenth year a voyage to Liverpool and later, in 1841, shipped before the mast on board a whaler bound for the Pacific. He cruised continuously for eighteen months, and so harshly were the sailors treated that while in the harbor of Nukahiva, one of the Marquesas Islands, he deserted and made his way inland. Here he fell in with the Typees, a wild race of cannibals, by whom he was captured. Having won their confidence, however, by a fortunate chance, he was kindly treated and after four months of captivity was rescued by an Australian whaler. After two years more afloat Melville, in 1846, published *Typee: a Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas*. Among his other works are *Omoo* (1847), *Redburn* and *Mardi*, and *a Voyage Thither* (1848), *White Jacket; or, The World in a Man-of-War* (1850), and *Moby Dick; or the Whale* (1851).

"Until Richard H. Dana and Herman Melville wrote, the commercial sailor of Great Britain and the United States was without representation in literature. . . . They were the first to lift the hatch and show the world what passes in a ship's forecabin; how men live down in that gloomy cave; how and what they eat and

where they sleep; what pleasures they take; what their sorrows and wrongs are; how they are used when they quit their black sea-parlors in response to the boatswain's silver summons to work on deck by day or by night. . . . Melville wrote out of his heart and out of wide and perhaps bitter experience; he enlarged our knowledge of the life of the deep by adding many descriptions to those which Dana had already given. His 'South Seaman' is typical. Dana sighted her, but Melville lived in her. His books are now but little read. . . . Yet a famous man he was in those far days when every sea was bright with the American flag, when the cotton-white canvas shone star-like on the horizon, when the nasal laugh of the jolly Yankee tar in China found its echo in Peru. Famous he was; now he is neglected; yet his name and works will not die. He is a great figure in shadow; but the shadow is not that of oblivion."— *W. Clark Russell.*

## X.

### THE POETS.

IN July, 1818, there appeared in the *North American Review* an essay on American poetry from the pen of William Cullen Bryant, in which he singled out and estimated those who up to that time had produced worthy verse on this side of the Atlantic. The list is singularly suggestive. The only poets he saw fit "to interrupt in their passage to oblivion," were the Rev. John Adams, Joseph Green, Francis Hopkinson, Dr. Church, Freneau; the Connecticut poets, Trumbull, Dwight, Barlow, Humphreys, and Hopkins; the youthful poet William Clifton, St. John Honeywood, and Robert Treat Paine. Of these poets, who were the bright particular representatives of American poetry almost at the end of the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century, scarcely one is to-day more than a mere name.

One style may be said to characterize the work of all these poets. Bryant, in the essay mentioned, denounced the style of poetry then prevalent, "as in too many instances tinged with a sickly and affected imitation of the peculiar manner of the late popular poets of England." Pope, with his heroic couplets, dominated American verse long after the revolt of the English natural school had thrown off its chain.

The first strong, original note in American poetry



came from Bryant. Although nurtured on the rhymes of Pope and Thomson, and writing his juvenile productions in heroic couplets, he was, nevertheless, the first influence that helped to free our song from the "ten-linked chain." The publication of "*Thanatopsis*" in 1817, and of *The Ages and Other Poems* in 1821, marks an epoch in the history of our poetry.

While American verse was thus making its first feeble beginnings, the firmament of English poetry was still glowing with the brilliant lights that had given glory to the second great creative period of English literature. In 1821, the birth year of American literature in all its departments, since it witnessed the production of *The Sketch Book*, *The Spy*, and Bryant's first volume of poems, Keats had just finished his short but brilliant career, Shelley was to follow him a year later and Byron soon after, while Wordsworth and Coleridge and Southey and scores of lesser lights were at the zenith, with Tennyson on the eastern horizon.

1777-1844.  
Thomas Campbell.  
1788-1824.  
Lord Byron.  
1779-1852.  
Thomas Moore.  
1792-1822.  
P. B. Shelley.  
1796-1821.  
John Keats.  
1784-1859.  
Leigh Hunt.  
1798-1845.  
Thomas Hood.  
1770-1850.  
William Wordsworth.  
1772-1834.  
S. T. Coleridge.  
1774-1843.  
Robert Southey.

### WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878).

"Bryant's writings transport us into the depths of the solemn, primeval forest ; to the shores of the lonely lake ; to the banks of the wild, nameless stream ; or the brow of the rocky upland rising like a promontory from amidst a wide ocean of foliage ; while they shed around us the glories of a climate fierce in its extremes, but splendid in all its vicissitudes." — *Washington Irving*.

**Life** (Parke Godwin's *William Cullen Bryant*, 1883, is the standard life of the poet; other *Lives* have been written by John Bigelow, in The American Men of Letters Series, 1890; by David J. Hill, in The American Authors Series, 1879; and by A. J. Symington. See also George William Curtis' *Homes of American Authors*, 1853; James Grant Wilson's *Bryant and his Friends*; R. H. Stoddard's *Homes and Haunts of our Elder Poets*; and Bryant's "Boys of my Boyhood," *St. Nicholas* for December, 1876).

Although the best part of Bryant's life-work was connected with New York, he belongs nevertheless to New England. Born in Cummington, Massachusetts, of the old *Mayflower* stock, he passed his boyhood and early manhood amid the Berkshire Hills, and his poems are as true to the New England landscape and spirit as are those of Whittier.

Bryant's father was a physician of good education and scholarly habits. His home was isolated, and his children had but few social privileges, but to compensate in a measure for this, he had gathered a large library for the times, one in which the English poets seem to have been largely represented, and in this his family revelled during the long winter evenings. In the brief autobiographical fragment given in Godwin's *Life of Bryant*, the poet tells remarkable stories of the precocity of his family, but these can easily be believed when we remember the poet's own early achievements. He pro-

duced excellent verses in his early boyhood; at the age of thirteen we find him writing a satire on Jefferson's administration, so excellent that the public could not believe it the work of a mere boy; and at the age of seventeen he wrote "Thanatopsis," which is, perhaps, "the highwater mark of American poetry."

In 1810 Bryant entered the class of 1813 in Williams College.

"I remained there two terms only, but I pursued my studies with the intent to become a student at Yale, for which I prepared myself, intending to enter the Junior Class there. My father, however, was not able, as he told me, to bear the expense. I had received an honorable dismissal from Williams College, and was much disappointed at being obliged to end my college course in that way." — *From a letter to H. W. Powers, 1878.*

Bryant next turned his attention to the law and in 1815 was admitted to the bar. The next nine years were quietly passed in the practice of his profession in the villages of Plainfield and Great Barrington, Massachusetts. But the poet was sadly out of place. In his poem, "Green River," published at this time, he complained of being

"forced to drudge for the dregs of men,  
And scrawl strange words with the barbarous pen,  
And mingle among the jostling crowd  
Where the sons of strife are subtle and loud."

It was a positive relief when, in 1825, through the influence of friends which his little volume of poems, published in 1821, had won for him, he went to New York City and devoted himself to literary work. During the following year he was made one of the editors

of the *New York Evening Post*, becoming soon after editor-in-chief of the paper, a position that he held for the rest of his life — a period of over half a century.

Bryant's life, like that of most men of letters, was bare of incident. The only variations from the monotonous life of the city editor were his six visits to Europe. During the last years of his life he was in almost constant demand as an orator on great occasions. Bryant died in New York City, June 12, 1878. On May 29 he had delivered an address in Central Park at the unveiling of the Mazzini statue. It was an exceedingly warm day and the sun shone fiercely down on the unprotected head of the poet. Later in the day, overcome with dizziness, he fell, striking his head on a stone curbing, from the effects of which blow he never rallied.

### Thanatopsis (1811). —

“‘Thanatopsis’ alone would establish a claim to genius.” — *Christopher North*.

Written “shortly after he was withdrawn from college, while residing with his parents at Cummington in the summer of 1811, and before he had attained his eighteenth year.” — *Godwin*.

Published in *North American Review*, September, 1817.

“There was no mistaking the quality of these verses. The stamp of genius was upon every line. No such verses had been made in America before. They soon found their way into the school books of the country. They were quoted from the pulpit and upon the hustings. Their gifted author had a national fame before he had a vote, and in due time ‘Thanatopsis’ took the place which it still retains among the masterpieces of English didactic poetry.” — *Godwin's Life of Bryant*.

REQUIRED READING. — “Thanatopsis.” The best study of Bryant's poetry for classroom use is Alden's *Studies in Bryant*.

**To a Waterfowl (1819). —**

“When he journeyed on foot over the hills to Plainfield on the 15th of December, 1816, to see what inducements it offered him to commence there the practice of the profession to which he had just been licensed, he says in one of his letters that he felt ‘very forlorn and desolate.’ The world seemed to grow bigger and darker as he ascended, and his future more uncertain and desperate. The sun had already set, leaving behind it one of those brilliant seas of chrysolite and opal which often flood the New England skies, and, while pausing to contemplate the rosy splendor with rapt admiration, a solitary bird made its winged way along the illuminated horizon. He watched the lone wanderer until it was lost in the distance. He then went on with new strength and courage. When he reached the house where he was to stop for the night, he immediately sat down and wrote the lines, “To a Waterfowl,” the concluding verse of which will perpetuate to future ages the lesson in faith which the scene had impressed upon him.

“‘He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.’”

—*John Bigelow's Life of Bryant.*

**REQUIRED READING.**—“To a Waterfowl.”

**The Ages (1821).**—The matchless poems just mentioned at once placed Bryant in the very front rank of American poets, a position that he has held until the present day. In 1821 he was invited to deliver the annual poem at Harvard, and he responded with the magnificent production, “The Ages,” which, at the earnest request of his friends, he published, together with seven others, among which were “Thanatopsis,” “To a Waterfowl,” “Inscription for the Entrance of a Wood,” “The Yellow Violet,” and “Green River.”

**Poems of Nature.** — Like Wordsworth, Bryant loved nature intensely, and the greater number of his poems were inspired by this love. He caught the poetry of the Indian Summer as Irving did its romance. He is the poet of the New England autumn. No one has so well pictured its brilliant foliage, its fading flowers, its dreamy, melancholy days. "Autumn Woods," "November," "The Death of the Flowers," "The Voice of Autumn," and "October" are poems that have become a part of our English language. He is also the poet of the New England wild flowers. The yellow violet, the fringed gentian, and the painted cup are as inseparably connected with his name as the rhodora is with Emerson's, the wild honeysuckle with Freneau's, the dandelion with Lowell's, the goldenrod with Whittier's, and the flower-de-luce with Longfellow's. He is the poet of all others that has sung best of the boundless forest and the prairies.

**FOR CLASS READING.** — The five autumn poems mentioned above, also "The Yellow Violet," "The Fringed Gentian," "The Painted Cup," "The Prairies," "The Forest Hymn."

**His Uniform Excellence.** — No poet has written so few inferior productions as Bryant. Hardly a line of all that he produced could be spared. Conscientious and painstaking, he was his own severest critic. His works can be judged by the severest standards and not fall short. He did not succeed by accident; he succeeded by fine poetic genius and patient hard work. He wrote no long poem. To pick here and there from his poems as a sample of his powers is taking an unfair advantage.



To understand the poetic work of Bryant one must read all that he has written.

**The Translation of Homer (1871-1872).—**

“One of the finest specimens of pure Saxon English in our language.” — *Bigelow*.

The translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* occupied the last years of Bryant's life. It has been observed that “Thanatopsis” is the most remarkable work ever done by a youth of eighteen; in like manner it may be said that the translation of Homer is the most remarkable work ever done by a man of eighty. It immediately became the standard English translation of the great epic poet. The old Greek had never been brought so near to readers of English.

REQUIRED READING. — “Ulysses among the Phæacians.” *Odyssey*, Book V.

**Bryant's Style.** — (Stedman, iii; Richardson, II., 35-49; Whipple's *Literature and Life*; John Wilson's *Essays: Critical and Imaginative*; Bayard Taylor's *Critical Essays and Literary Notes*; Deshler's *Afternoons with the Poets* [Bryant's Sonnets]; George William Curtis' Address before the New York Historical Society; Lowell's *Fable for Critics*.)

Bryant's poems are cold and stately. There is in them none of the passion and fire that characterize much of the work of Whittier and Longfellow and Poe. Everything in his verse is classically moulded, like a Greek frieze carved from cold marble, yet faultless in its art. He was a perfect master of English, and

no American has better understood the technique of his art. His blank verse has never been surpassed; stately and melodious, it reminds one of Milton.

**His Character.** — “There is probably no eminent man in the country upon whose life and genius and career the verdict of his fellow-citizens would be more immediate and unanimous. His character and life had a simplicity and austerity of outline that had become universally familiar, like a neighboring mountain or the sea. His convictions were very strong, and his temper uncompromising; he was independent beyond most Americans. He was an editor and a partisan; but he held politics and all other things subordinate to the truth and the common welfare, and his earnestness and sincerity and freedom from selfish ends took the sting of personality from his opposition, and constantly placated all who, like him, sought lofty and virtuous objects. . . . This same bent of nature showed itself in the character of his verse. His poetry is intensely and distinctively American. He was a man of scholarly accomplishment, familiar with other languages and literature. But there is no tone or taste of anything not peculiarly American in his poetry. It is as characteristic as the wine of the Catawba grape, and could have been written only in America by an American naturally sensitive to whatever is most distinctively American.”  
— *George William Curtis.*

**REQUIRED READING.** — Poems on Bryant's Seventieth Birthday by Holmes, Whittier, and Lowell.

**“The Dawn of Imagination.”** — The imaginative element was slow to enter American literature. The Puritan mind dealt with facts, not fancies. Wild vagaries like the *Faërie Queene* and *The Midsummer Night's Dream* held no beauties for him that could enjoy *The Day of Doom*. The ponderous Revolutionary poets kept their feet firmly on the solid earth, while Bryant, dignified and majestic, never attempted the light paces of fancy.

The "dawn of imagination," as Professor Richardson terms it, came with Drake and Halleck.

JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE (1795-1820).

"Drake was a born singer, —almost an *improvisatore*, — whose imaginative faculty, although of rather flimsy texture, was always rapid, joyous, and infectious." — *Bayard Taylor*.

**Life.** — (No life of Drake and no complete collection of his poems have yet been published. See Wilson's *Life of Halleck*, and *Bryant and his Friends*; also Richardson, II., 24-27.) The lives of Joseph Rodman Drake and the English poet Keats seem to have had much in common. Born the same year, they died within a few months of each other of the same disease. Forced from childhood to struggle with poverty, each received no systematic education, and each at length chose the medical profession as a means for winning daily bread. When consumptive tendencies became marked, Drake sought in vain for relief in New Orleans, while Keats went to the south of Europe. Both died at the early age of twenty-five, when life had hardly begun. Farther than this the comparison may not safely be made, for although Drake produced a few lyrics of exquisite beauty that are not forgotten, Keats has left work that will stand while the language endures.

One of the most important circumstances in the lives of Drake and Fitz-Greene Halleck, and indeed one of the most charming episodes in the history of American

literature, was the life-long friendship of the two poets, which began some months after Halleck's removal to New York in 1811. The chief literary result of this friendship was *The Croaker Papers*, a series of light, satirical poems, "contributed," in the words of Halleck, "anonymously to the columns of the *New York Evening Post* from March to June, 1819, and occasionally afterwards." After the death of Drake these *Papers* were published in an elegant edition, but they are now more easily to be found in the 1868 edition of Halleck's poems.

"Whoever among the present generation wishes to learn something of the leading men of the city and state and of the social, scientific, and political events of so interesting a decade as that of 1819-1829 in New York history, cannot but be enlightened, as well as greatly amused, by a perusal of these sprightly poems." — *J. G. Wilson*.

But Drake's claim to remembrance rests almost wholly upon *The Culprit Fay*, written, according to the best authority, in 1816, when the poet was in his twenty-third year. This fanciful rhyme of fairyland, laid amid the Highlands of the Hudson, tells with minuteness the story of a fay, who, for loving "an earthly maid," was condemned by the fairy court to purge his wings with a drop caught when

"The sturgeon leaps in the bright moonshine ;"

and to follow with speed the first shooting star, for

"The last faint spark of its burning train  
Shall light the elfin lamp again."

The melody of this dainty creation is haunting in its sweetness; its movement is rapid and spontaneous, its descriptions of fairy equipment exquisitely drawn. Poe called it fanciful rather than imaginative; some have complained that it is extravagant in color and figure, yet it remains, notwithstanding, one of the most charming of fairy tales, a veritable midsummer night's dream.

REQUIRED READING. — *The Culprit Fay*.

### FITZ-GREENE HALLECK (1790–1867).

“A natural lyrist, whose pathos and eloquence were inborn, and whose sentiment, though he wrote in the prevailing English mode, was that of his own land.” — *Stedman*.

**Life** (by James Grant Wilson, 1869. See also the elegant *Memorial of Fitz-Greene Halleck* containing the addresses and poems delivered at the dedication of the Halleck Monument in Guilford, Connecticut, and at the unveiling of the Central Park statue, 1877, with numerous engravings. See also Wilson's *Bryant and his Friends*, 1886; Poe's *Literati* and Lowell's *Fable for Critics*.)

“Marco Bozaris.”

“Burns.”

“Red Jacket.”

“Alnwick Castle.”

“Fanny.”

“On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake.”

As late as 1846, Poe, in his *Literati of New York*, declared that

“Our principal poets are perhaps most frequently named in this order: Bryant, Halleck, Dana, Sprague, Longfellow, Willis, and so on — Halleck coming second in the series, but holding, in fact, a rank in the public opinion quite equal to that of Bryant.”

But it was the fame of his early work that kept Halleck's name thus prominent. Drake, with his vivacity

and his fine fancy, seems to have been his inspiration. The edition of his poems published in 1827, seven years after the death of his young friend, contains nearly everything of value that Halleck has given to the world. In it was "Marco Bozzaris," his finest lyric, an heroic ode that has the ring of Campbell at his best, and it also contained the fine poems "Burns" and "Alnwick Castle" and the immortal tribute to his early friend Drake, commencing

"Green be the turf above thee,  
Friend of my better days!  
None knew thee but to love thee,  
Nor named thee but to praise."

In 1849, at the death of John Jacob Astor, in whose counting-room he had been employed for sixteen years, Halleck returned to his native Guilford, Connecticut, whence he had wandered a half century before, to settle down, as he expressed it,

"Passing rich with forty pounds a year,"

from the estate of his late employer. Here he died in 1867, nearly fifty years after the youthful poet whose name stands linked with his.

"Halleck's importance is at once perceived, if we project him against the background of his time. His position is almost that of the German poet, Gellert, — the first to sing a natural note, in a waste of dulness and imitation, and growing silent as he lived to be the contemporary of far greater men. Each of his lyrics came forth like a burst of light, because the poetic atmosphere was one of level gloom. He was the American twin brother of Campbell, to whom, as a poet, he always felt nearest, yet whom he never imitated. The ten years, from 1817 to 1827, begin and



complete his season of productiveness. Nothing that he wrote before or after that period possesses any vitality; and it is probable, in fact, that he will only be known to later generations by six poems, which I venture to name in the order of their excellence: 'Marco Bozzaris,' 'Burns,' 'Red Jacket,' 'Alnwick Castle,' 'The Field of the Grounded Arms,' and 'On the Death of Drake.' His 'Fanny' may still be read with interest, but its original charm faded away with the surprise of its appearance." — *Bayard Taylor*.

REQUIRED READING. — "Marco Bozzaris," "On the Death of Drake," and "Burns." Also Whittier's poem "Fitz-Greene Halleck."

#### MINOR POETS.

**Washington Allston** (1779–1843), whom Underwood designates as "perhaps the greatest painter of our English race," was one of the most cultured men of early New England; a writer of force and imagination, and a conversationalist of the very first order. He was born in South Carolina, but removing in early boyhood to New England, he was graduated at Harvard in 1800, and shortly afterwards entered the Royal Academy in England. He spent much of his life abroad, especially in Rome, where Irving found him in 1804, and became so charmed with the man and his life that he for a time seriously contemplated the study of painting as a life-work. Allston's chief poetical work, the *Sylphs of the Seasons*, appeared in London in 1813. But, while his poems have many beauties, it is chiefly as an influence that he is remembered in literature. Compared with many of his contemporaries, his production was small indeed, yet it should not be forgotten that, in introducing America to the culture of Europe, Allston did a

service to our literature second only to that rendered by Longfellow.

**John Pierpont** (1785–1866), a native of Connecticut and a graduate of Yale, after a short career as a lawyer and a merchant, was ordained in 1819 as pastor of the Hollis Street Church, Boston, where he served for more than a quarter of a century. His *Airs of Palestine*, 1816, gave him a wide popularity. He wrote very voluminously both in prose and verse, his poems being chiefly hymns and odes written for various occasions, but his fame, like the refrain of his best-known poem, is “passing away.” (See Wilson’s *Bryant and his Friends*.)

**Richard Henry Dana** (1787–1879), like Bryant, lived to see almost the whole history of American literature, from its first feeble beginnings until the present time.

With few other authors has time so reversed her first judgments. For almost half a century Dana was counted with the three or four greatest American poets, while to-day he is remembered chiefly by his long poem, *The Buccaneers*. But though, like Allston’s, his actual production was small, his influence for good on our literature, in its most critical period, cannot be overestimated. Aside from his poems, he contributed to the *North American Review* a series of papers on the English poets, that won for him a place that he still holds among the best American literary critics. He delivered lectures on Shakespeare, published several thin volumes of poetry and two psychological novels, and in 1821, assisted by Bryant and Allston, established

in Boston *The Idle Man*, a periodical somewhat after the style of Johnson's *Rambler* and *Idler*.

Dana was a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where the most of his life was passed, and where he died at the great age of ninety-two. His son, R. H. Dana, Jr. (1815-1882), was the author of *Two Years Before the Mast* (1837), by many considered the best sea narrative in the language. See page 152.

See *Bryant and his Friends*; Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, Vol. II., also Adams' *Life of R. H. Dana, Jr.*

**Lydia Huntley Sigourney** (1791-1865), a native of Norwich, Connecticut, was the author of no less than forty-six distinct works in prose and verse. Her sympathies and her sincere religious convictions shine sweetly from all her writings. As a poet, she was exceedingly popular, especially with religious readers. "Niagara," "The Death of an Infant," and "Winter" are among her best poems. See Whittier's Poem to Lydia H. Sigourney.

**Charles Sprague** (1791-1875) is another example of the emptiness of contemporary fame. During the first half of the century he ranked second only to Bryant and Halleck, but to-day he is little more than a vague memory. Sprague was a banker in Boston, and during the whole of his long life never went ten miles from his native city. His *Ode to Shakespeare*, a carefully elaborated production, which really possesses literary merit of a high order, was hailed by contemporary critics as the equal of Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, and the superior even of Dryden's "Alexander's Feast." As an

orator, Sprague won many laurels. His Fourth of July oration, of 1825, has been declaimed by thousands of schoolboys.

**Maria Gowen Brooks** (1795–1845), hailed by Southey as “Maria del Occidente,” was a native of Medford, Massachusetts. In 1830 she visited England, where she lived for a time in the home of the poet Southey, who declared her “the most impassioned and most imaginative of all the poetesses.” Her chief work, *Zophiel; or the Bride of Seven*, London, 1833, a poem evidently inspired by the *Book of Tobit* in the Apocrypha, shows great artistic skill and power, but lacks simplicity and human tenderness. It is purely an intellectual production. *Idomen; or the Vale of Yumuri*, an autobiographic poem, appeared shortly before the author’s death.

**James Gates Percival** (1795–1857), a native of Connecticut, an eminent scholar and linguist, was at one time considered the most promising American poet, but his verses were hastily written and never revised, and his carelessness has consigned him, along with others far less gifted, to oblivion. His best known poems are “The Coral Grove,” “Seneca Lake,” and “Mary.”

See Lowell’s *My Study Windows*.

**John G. C. Brainerd** (1796–1828), born in New London, Connecticut, and a member of the class of 1815 at Yale, died of consumption at the early age of thirty-two. His poems, little lyrics charmingly constructed, possess, in many instances, merits of a high order. His “Fall of Niagara,” containing only nineteen lines, was

declared by Jared Sparks to be the most forcible and the most graphically correct poem ever written on the great cataract. A complete edition of Brainerd's poems, with an appreciative memoir by Whittier, appeared four years after the poet's death. An elegant edition, with a memoir by the Rev. Royal Robbins, was published in Hartford in 1842.

**George P. Morris** (1802-1864), a native of Philadelphia, whom Tuckerman mentions as pre-eminently "the song-writer of America," was during nearly all of his life connected with journalism in New York City. His lyrics like "My Mother's Bible," "Woodman, Spare that Tree," and scores of others, which deal with the common experiences of home life, are "heart-songs" that can never grow old. No poet of his generation was more loved both in Europe and America.

See *Literary Criticisms*, by Horace Binney Wallace.

**Single Poem Poets.** — This period of American literature produced a large number of single lyrics which have become famous apart from the names of their authors. Among these may be mentioned "The Star-spangled Banner," by Francis Scott Key (1779-1843); "The Old Oaken Bucket," by Samuel Woodworth (1785-1842); and "My Life is like a Summer Rose," by Richard Henry Wilde (1789-1847). Although John Howard Payne (1792-1852) wrote upwards of sixty dramas, he is now remembered solely on account of his little lyric "Home, Sweet Home," originally a part of his play *The Maid of Milan*.

## XI.

### EDGAR ALLAN POE.

1809-1849.

“Alone among our poets Poe links us to European literature by his musical despair.” — *Greenough White*.

EDGAR ALLAN POE stands solitary among the American men of letters. Although, by a strange chance, born in Boston, he had nothing in common with the New England group of authors, and although he passed an important part of his life in New York City, he was in no way a member of the Knickerbocker School. Whether viewed as poet, romancer, or critic, he stands by himself; he refuses to be classified; he seems out of place in American literature, like an importation from the Old World, — a Pushkin, or Heine, or De Musset; like a brilliant exotic among the native wild flowers.

**Life.** — (Poe's writings were first collected in 1850 by Rufus W. Griswold in a four volume edition prefaced by a memoir. This sketch, written in a hostile spirit, was answered in 1859 in Sarah H. Whitman's *Edgar A. Poe and his Critics*, and later by John Ingram and by W. F. Gill. Prefixed to various editions of Poe's works have been notices of his life and genius by such writers as Willis, Lowell, Stoddard, Charles F. Briggs, James Hanny, Edmund Blanchard, and others.



Poe's life has also been written by Eugene Didier and by George E. Woodberry. The latter work, which is one of the American Men of Letters Series, and which is the most accurate and impartial life of the poet that has yet appeared, is the only one that can be recommended without reserve for school use. The best edition of Poe's works is that published in six volumes in 1844, edited by R. H. Stoddard. This edition contains many fac-simile manuscripts, an excellent *Life* by the editor, and the essay contributed by Lowell at Poe's request to *Graham's Magazine* in 1845. A complete and final edition of Poe's works in twelve volumes, edited by G. E. Woodberry and E. C. Stedman, is at present [1895] publishing.)

In the biography of no eminent American is it so difficult to arrive at the unvarnished truth as in that of Poe. His own statements cannot be trusted for a moment. He gave, at various times, at least three widely different dates for his birth; he seemed to be proud of the reckless exploits of his youth, and magnified them when possible; and he sanctioned the wildest fables, like the story of his journey to St. Petersburg in 1827. His biographers have taken every standpoint, from that of Griswold, a bitter enemy, to that of Ingram, who goes to the opposite extreme of laudation.

Poe was born in Boston, Jan. 19, 1809. His father, David Poe, the son of a distinguished Revolutionary officer of Baltimore, had abandoned the law to become an indifferent actor, and in 1805 had married Mrs. Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins, a pretty, young actress of con-

siderable ability. During the three years ending in September, 1809, they had found steady employment in Boston, but in 1811 both died of quick consumption, leaving three destitute children, the eldest only five years of age. Their pitiful condition attracted the attention of the people of Richmond; where the mother had died, and Edgar, the second of the family, a bright, beautiful boy, was taken into the home of Mr. John Allan, a wealthy tobacco merchant. The child was given every advantage. When six years of age he was taken by his foster parents to England, where for five years he attended a private school near London. Returning to Richmond in 1820, he was provided with private tutors, and was ready in 1826 to enter the University of Virginia. By December of the same year he had contracted so many debts that Mr. Allan refused to furnish more money, and Poe was accordingly given a chance in the counting-room at Richmond. Becoming disgusted with this work, he soon left the city, and, pressing on to Boston, published, in 1827, a thin volume of poems under the title *Tamerlane and Other Poems. By a Bostonian*. In May of the same year he enlisted in the regular army, where he served for two years, rising to the rank of sergeant-major. In 1829, learning of the death of Mrs. Allan, Poe went home on a furlough, was forgiven by his foster father, and through his influence was appointed a cadet at West Point. In ten months he was cashiered for misconduct, and was immediately disowned by Mr. Allan, who, dying soon afterwards, made no mention of him in his will.

The next period in Poe's career was passed in Baltimore, which, as it was then the literary capital of the South, had attracted the ambitious young poet. But his literary efforts were wholly without success until 1833, when he succeeded in winning the one hundred dollar prize offered by the newly established *Saturday Visitor* for the best short story. John P. Kennedy, who was one of the judges, afterwards declared that Poe's manuscript, which was as clean and legible as print, was decided upon almost at sight. Poe had submitted six tales, neatly bound, entitled *Tales of the Folio Club*, from which was selected for publication "The Manuscript Found in a Bottle." During the next two years Poe made his home with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, and in 1835, through the efforts of Kennedy, secured a place on *The Southern Literary Messenger*, of which he soon became sole editor. In 1836 he was married to his cousin, Virginia Clemm, a frail, beautiful girl of fourteen, whose love was the brightest sunbeam that ever entered his sad life. Every prospect of happiness and success seemed before him; *The Messenger* became widely known, carrying everywhere his fame as a critic and story writer, but in eighteen months he was again a wanderer.

During the next five years Poe was employed in Philadelphia, first on the editorial staff of *The Gentleman's Magazine* and afterwards on that of *Graham's Monthly*. In 1842, he removed to New York, where the rest of his life was passed. He found employment for a time under N. P. Willis on *The Evening Mirror* and

he afterwards became connected with *The Broadway Journal*, but his unfortunate habits rendered it impossible for him long to retain a position. "The Raven," which appeared in 1844, immediately gave him an unprecedented popularity, but his wife was wasting away with consumption amid all the accompaniments of abject poverty. In spite of his increasing fame and his steady hard work, he was obliged to receive pecuniary aid. After his wife's death in 1847, Poe seemed half insane and wholly reckless. Two years later he proposed marriage to a Mrs. Shelton, of Richmond, a friend of his boyhood, and, being accepted, immediately started south to make arrangements for the wedding, but falling in with old companions in Baltimore, he became crazed with drink, and was found unconscious several days later. He lingered until October 7, when he died in the forty-first year of his age. Such, in brief, is the sad and tragic story of Edgar Allan Poe.

1. **As a Critic.** — It should be remembered that Poe first became known to the reading public not as a poet nor as a story writer, but as a critic, and that it was in this rôle that he was best known throughout the greater part of his life. In 1835, by a single skilful review of a crude but popular novel, he placed *The Southern Literary Messenger* beside the best American magazines. Throughout his life it was in the service of criticism that his pen was oftenest used.

That Poe was an unfair and one-sided critic cannot be disputed; that his personal likes and dislikes had great influence upon his estimates, is all too true, yet in spite

of all this his work in this department cannot be overlooked. In his work on *The Southern Literary Messenger* he certainly inaugurated "the new age in American criticism." All his honest criticisms have been proved by time to be strikingly correct. It was Poe who hailed Hawthorne as a novelist of the first rank when that shy genius was "the obscurest man of letters in America." Poe was quick to see the true worth of Longfellow and of many another American poet at a time when they were all but unknown.

Of Poe's methods as a critic Mr. Woodberry says :

"The whole mass of his criticism—but a small portion of which deals with imaginative work—is particularly characterized by a minuteness of treatment which springs from a keen, artistic sensibility, and by that constant regard to the originality of the writer which is so frequently an element in the jealousy of genius. One wearies in reading it now; but one gains thereby the better impression of Poe's patience and of the alertness and compass of his mental curiosity."—*Life of Poe*.

Poe failed of winning a high place as a critic, first, because of his inordinate vanity. He wished to be regarded as a profound scholar and accordingly disfigured his work with abundant allusions to occult and curious lore of which he really knew very little. He delighted to show the resources of his analytical mind by investigating minute and unimportant points. Secondly, he had a hobby,—the charge of plagiarism,—from which he never dismounted, and thirdly, he was not honest. His *Literati of New York*, while it contains very much valuable criticism, is justly to be regarded with suspicion from its senseless denunciation of its

author's enemies and its sickening laudation of his worthless friends.

Stoddard's judgment of Poe's criticism is summed up in one sentence :

" Apart from the mechanism of authorship, which he called ' the philosophy of composition,' his verdicts were of no value."

REQUIRED READING. — " The Poetic Principle."

## 2. As a Poet.—(Stedman, 239; Richardson, II., 97–116.)

Poe's fame as a poet rests on less than a dozen short

" The Raven." poems. Few writers of any land have

" The Bells." reached anything even approximating his

" To Helen." literary position with so thin a repertory,

" The City in the Sea." yet had Poe written only " The Raven "

" The Valley of Unrest." his literary fame would still be secure.

" The Haunted Palace." All that he wrote was distinctly his own,

" To One in Paradise." original in its melody and form, and per-

" Ulalume." meated through and through with his

" Israfel." peculiar personality. His sense of beauty

" The Conqueror Worm." was marvellously fine. Though his poems

are all sombre in hue, — mere cries of despair, — there

is a haunting beauty in their melody which makes them

cling in the memory, even against the will. There is

something almost magical in the melody of such lines as

" For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee ;

And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes

Of the beautiful Annabel Lee."

Poe has expressed his theory of poetical beauty in its highest manifestations by saying :



"All experience has shown that this tone is one of sadness. Beauty of whatever kind in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones. . . . Death is the most melancholy topic according to the universal understanding of mankind . . . and most melancholy when it most closely allies itself to beauty." — *The Philosophy of Composition*.

In accordance with this principle nearly all of Poe's poetical work was done. With few exceptions his theme is the same. With him poetry was a sacred thing, "not a purpose but a passion," and he gave to it only his best.

REQUIRED READING. — The ten poems at the margin.

3. **As a Romancer.** — (Woodberry, 117; Stedman, 252; Richardson, II., 116-136.) It was, perhaps, in the domain of the short prose romance that Poe was at his best, for here his imagination had free play. His tales, all of which are short, and which when combined scarcely make a volume of the size of Hawthorne's *Twice-told Tales*, may be divided into two classes: imaginative tales and analytical tales. Of the former only two, "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher," need be mentioned. These mark the flood tide of Poe's creative achievement.

"In 'Al Araaf' he had framed out of the breath of the night wind and the idea of the harmony of universal nature a fairy creature, —

'Ligeia, Ligeia, my beautiful one!'

Now, by a finer touch, he incarnated the motions of the breeze, and the musical voices of nature, in the form of a woman: but the Lady Ligeia has still no human quality; her aspirations, her thoughts and capabilities, are those of a spirit; the very beam and

glitter and silence of her ineffable eyes belong to the visionary world. She is, in fact, the maiden of Poe's dream, the Eidolon he served, the air-woven divinity in which he believed; for he had the true myth-making faculty, the power to make his senses aver what his imagination perceived. . In revealing through 'Ligeia' the awful might of the soul in the victory of its will over death, and in the eternity of its love, Poe worked in the very element of his reverie, in the liberty of a world as he would have it. Upon this story he lavished all his poetic, inventive, and literary skill, and at last perfected an exquisitely conceived work, and made it, within its own laws, as faultless as humanity can fashion." — *Woodberry*.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" is nearly as perfect in its art. (For Poe's idea of the short prose romance as a vehicle of artistic expression, see his review of Hawthorne's *Tales*, *Works*, Vol. VI.)

The second division of Poe's tales may be understood best from his ingenious tale, "The Gold Bug." Poe's brain was keen and electric. He had the analytic faculty in a high degree, and he delighted in applying it to the solution of almost impossible problems. It is true that it is not hard to find the clew in a maze of one's own construction. Poe's ability as an analytic thinker has therefore been challenged, since he was free to make the web from which he was to escape. But one should not forget that it requires just as much skill to make a successful maze as it does to escape from one already constructed. Poe demonstrated fully his analytical powers by telling the complete plot of Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge*, after reading the first magazine instalment of the novel, a feat that filled Dickens with amazement. With his tale, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Poe may be said to have originated the modern detective

story. "The Gold Bug" is a tale of the recovery of a vast buried treasure through the deciphering of an almost impossible cryptogram.

REQUIRED READING. — "Ligeia;" "The Fall of the House of Usher;" "The Gold Bug."

The rest of Poe's tales need not be mentioned. Their style is clear and seemingly definite, but the impression left on the reader is always vague and awful. Their domain is ghost land. Their very titles are fearsome. They teach no lesson and serve no purpose, save to chill the blood by mere revolting physical horror. In his best tales Poe's art is equal to Hawthorne's. His plots are arranged with great skill, and the reader is drawn rapidly to the climax in the way that will most completely unnerve him. Poe's one thought was of the effect he was producing on his reader. Instruction and moral lessons had, he maintained, no place in fiction.

**Poe's Character and Rank.** — The faults of no American author have been so paraded before the public as those of Poe. Griswold, his first biographer, dwelt at length upon his failings, but a more charitable view has been taken by later writers. Willis, who knew him intimately, declared that "he was punctual and industrious, quiet, patient, gentlemanly, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling." In his home Poe was at his best. Passionately devoted to his wife and her mother, his domestic life was well-nigh faultless. When sober he took the greatest pains with his productions. He rewrote his earlier poems many times, some of his most

haunting melodies being the result of the most exacting effort.

“On the roll of our literature Poe’s name is inscribed with the few foremost, and in the world at large his genius is established as valid among all men. Much as he derived nurture from other sources he was the son of Coleridge by the weird touch in his imagination, by the principles of his analytic criticism, and the speculative bent of his mind. An artist primarily, whose skill, helped by the finest sensitive and perceptive powers in himself, was developed by thought, patience, and endless self-correction into a subtle deftness of hand unsurpassed in its own work, he belonged to the men of culture instead of those of originally perfect power; but being gifted with the dreaming instinct, the myth-making faculty, the allegorizing power, and with no other poetic element of high genius, he exercised his art in a region of vague feeling, symbolic ideas, and fantastic imagery, and wrought his spell largely through sensuous effects of color, sound, and gloom, heightened by lurking but unshaped suggestions of mysterious meanings. Now and then gleams of light and sketches of lovely landscape shine out, but for the most part his mastery was over dismal, superstitious, and waste places. In imagination, as in action, his was an evil genius; and in its realms of revery he dwelt alone.” — *Woodberry*.

Poe’s grave in Baltimore remained without a mark until 1875, when a stone was raised to his memory. In 1885 a memorial tablet was placed in the New York Museum of Art with the inscription

“He was great in his genius, unhappy in his life, wretched in his death, but in his fame he is immortal.”

## XII.

### THE ORATORS.

THAT the art of oratory reached its highest development in America during the first half of the nineteenth century was the direct result of the spirit of the age. Politics held the first place in the popular mind, but in politics everything turned on one great, burning issue, — slavery. Never was there a question that divided public opinion more sharply, never was there an issue that was fought and defended with more bitterness. The history of the legislation of the period is but the story of this one question, and of the problems which grew from it. Congress became the scene of fierce and prolonged debates. It was a school from which came some of the most wonderful orators of the century.

The two parties were of almost equal strength. New States were admitted in pairs, so that the free and the slave territory were kept constantly equal. The first alarming crisis came in 1820, when Missouri sought admission as a slave State, but under the skilful leadership of Clay, who framed the measure known as the "Missouri Compromise," the danger was averted. The relief was only temporary, however, for soon the fight waged with still greater fierceness over the "Wilmot

Proviso" and the "Kansas-Nebraska Bill." The debates centred about the dangerous doctrine of States Rights. The South maintained that the Union was not necessarily a homogeneous organism, but rather a league of friendly powers which were to act together when convenient, but which were otherwise free to follow their own counsels. South Carolina even maintained that each State was the judge of the legality and constitutionality of any act of Congress, and in 1832 actually attempted to put in practice this theory. Since both parties professed to "stand upon" the Constitution, this instrument was studied with extreme care and expounded with much learning and rhetoric. During the period, the leaders of the Northern forces were Webster and Clay; while the South rallied about Calhoun and Hayne.

DANIEL WEBSTER (1782-1852).

"The orator of the Union."

"Take him for all in all, he was not only the greatest orator this country has ever known, but in the history of eloquence his name will stand with those of Demosthenes and Cicero, of Chatham and Burke." — *Lodge*.

**Life.** — (The standard *Life of Webster* is that by George Ticknor Curtis, 1870. In 1851 Webster's works were collected in six volumes with a biographical sketch by Edward Everett. *Webster's Private Correspondence*, edited by his son, Fletcher Webster, appeared in 1856. Among the great mass of Websteriana may be mentioned the *Life*, by Charles Lanman, and that by Henry Cabot Lodge, in the American Statesmen Series. The



best study of the comparative excellence of Webster's eloquence is Judge Mellen Chamberlain's speech at the Dartmouth College alumni dinner, a work now issued in pamphlet form.)

Daniel Webster was born in Salisbury (now Franklin), New Hampshire, during the last year of the Revolution. His father, a strong and daring man, had served through the French and Indian War as a member of the famous corps of frontiersmen known as "Rogers' Rangers," and during the Revolution he had left his little family on their backwoods farm, and had served with distinction to the close of the war. Daniel, the second son of this family, was weak and delicate. For him the severe round of farm life was out of the question, and in spite of the straitened resources of the hard-working parents, it was decided that he should go to college. Under the tutorship of a clergyman in a neighboring town, he was fitted, in 1797, for Dartmouth College, from which he was graduated in 1801. After teaching for a short time in Fryeburg, Maine, he commenced the study of law in his native town, continuing it later in the office of Christopher Gore in Boston, and, in 1805, he was admitted to the bar. He thereupon practised his profession first in Boscawen, and afterwards in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, rising with rapid strides to legal prominence. In 1812, he was elected to Congress, and the remainder of his life was spent in public life or in the practice of his profession, of which he was soon the recognized leader. He served for three terms as senator from Massachusetts,

and was Secretary of State under both Harrison and Fillmore.

Webster's first great oration was delivered in 1820 at the Second Centennial of the landing of the Pilgrims. In 1825, he was the orator at the laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill Monument, and during the following year he was chosen to deliver the eulogy on Adams and Jefferson. In 1829, he made the crowning speech of his life in the United States Senate, in reply to an attack by Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina. During the same year he delivered the famous speech at the White murder trial in Salem.

He died at Marshfield, Massachusetts, Oct. 24, 1852.

**His Personal Appearance.** — Mr. Lodge in his admirable life of Webster says, "There is no man in all history who came into the world so equipped physically for speech." His person was imposing, his head was of massive size, his eyes deep-set and piercing, his voice powerful and sonorous, giving the impression of vast powers held in reserve. Carlyle, who was not usually impressed by Americans, wrote to Emerson in 1839:

"Not many days ago I saw at breakfast the notableness of all your notabilities, — Daniel Webster. He is a magnificent specimen; you might say to all the world, 'This is your Yankee Englishman, such limbs we make in Yankeeland.' As a logic fencer, advocate, or parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back him at first sight against all the extant world. The tanned complexion; that amorphous, crag-like face; the dull black eyes under their precipice of eyebrow, like dull anthracite furnaces, needing only to be *blown*; the mastiff mouth, accurately closed. I have not traced as much of silent Berserkir-rage, that I remember of, in any other man." — *The Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*.

When in action Webster swept all before him. Once seen when he was deeply stirred, he could never be forgotten.

“As his feelings warmed the fire came into his eyes; there was a glow on his swarthy cheek; his strong right arm seemed to sweep away resistlessly the whole phalanx of his opponents, and the deep and melodious cadences of his voice sounded like harmonious organ tones as they filled the chamber with their music.” — *Lodge*.

**As a Master of English Style.** — (See Whipple's *American Literature and Essays and Reviews*, Vol. I.) As the master of a pure and vigorous English prose style, Webster has had few equals. His best orations may be studied as models of correct diction and rhetorical finish. His style may be characterized as majestic. It abounds in sonorous and elaborate word pictures. He was a clear thinker, and his sentences are as clear as his thought. His combinations are accurate and logical, and his illustrations are forceful. The orations of Clay and Calhoun seem dull and spiritless as we read them now; the magnetism of the orator, the tones of his voice, the flash of his eye, and the thrill of the occasion gave the words a life and power which vanished as soon as they passed into print. But Webster's orations lose nothing with time. They are full of their original force and fire. They hold the reader as the orator held his audience, and we feel the thrill and excitement of the original occasion. It is this that brings the work of Webster into the realm of pure literature.

“In the sphere of literature Webster has a clear title to be held as one of the greatest authors and writers of our mother tongue that America has produced. I propose to the most competent

critics of the nation that they can find nowhere six octavo volumes of printed literary production of an American that contain as much noble and as much beautiful imagery, as much warmth of rhetoric, and of magnetic impression upon the reader as are to be found in the collected writings and speeches of Daniel Webster." — *Evarts*.

REQUIRED READING. — *The Plymouth Oration, The First Bunker Hill Oration.*

### RUFUS CHOATE (1799–1859).

**Life** (by E. G. Parker; by Joseph Neilson, 1884. See also selections from the writings of Choate in two volumes, with memoir by S. G. Brown; and Whipple's *Recollections of Eminent Men*, and *Essays and Reviews*, Vol. II.). Rufus Choate, a native of Essex, Massachusetts, and a member of the class of 1819 at Dartmouth, was in many respects the equal of Webster as an orator. He was a man of deep scholarship, of wide and varied reading, and refinement of character. As a lawyer he has had no superior in America. His mind was accurate and analytical, singularly adapted to the sifting of evidence, while his power over juries was phenomenal.

His style is peculiar. His intimate knowledge of the intricacies of the English tongue, and his deep classical education, enriched his oratory. His vocabulary was exhaustive; he used adjectives with the skill of a painter; and his sentences, with their subdivisions within subdivisions, are marvels of length and arrangement. Some of them contain from four hundred to seven hundred words. His best known oration is the eulogy delivered on the death of Webster.

**Webster and Choate.**—“Webster and Choate, each in a different way, were perfection. The eloquence of Webster had the affluent potentiality of the rising sun, of the lonely mountain, of the long, regular, successive surges of the resounding sea. His periods are as lucid as light; his logic was irresistible; his facts came on in a solid phalanx of overwhelming power; his tones were crystal clear; his magnificent person towered in dignity, and seemed colossal in its imperial grandeur; his voice grew in volume, as he became more and more aroused, and his language, glowing with the fire of conviction, rose in swells, and broke, like the great ninth wave that shakes the solid crag. His speech, however, was addressed always to the reason, never to the imagination. The eloquence of Rufus Choate, on the other hand, was the passionate enchantment of the actor and the poet,—an eloquence in which you felt the rush of the tempest, and heard the crash of breakers, and the howling of frantic gales, and the sobbing wail of homeless winds in bleak and haunted regions of perpetual night. He began calmly, often in a tone that was hardly more than a whisper; but as he proceeded the whole man was gradually absorbed and transfigured, as into a mountain of fire, which then poured forth, in one tumultuous and overwhelming torrent of melody, the iridescent splendors of description, and appeal, and humor, and pathos, and invective, and sarcasm, and poetry, and beauty,—till the listener lost all consciousness of self, and was borne away as on a golden river to a land of dreams. The vocabulary of that orator seemed literally to have no limit. His voice sounded every note, from a low, piercing whisper to a shrill, sonorous scream. His remarkable appearance, furthermore, enhanced the magic of his speech. The tall, gaunt, vital figure, the symmetrical head, the clustered hair,—once black, now faintly touched with gray,—the emaciated, haggard countenance, the pallid olive complexion, the proud Arabian features, the mournful, flaming brown eyes, the imperial demeanor and wild and lawless grace, the poetic personality, commingled with the boundless resources of his eloquence to rivet the spell of altogether exceptional character and genius.”  
— *William Winter's eulogy on Curtis.*

**SUGGESTED READING.**—“Eulogy on Daniel Webster.”



## HENRY CLAY (1777-1852).

“The great reconciler, the orator of sympathy.”

**Life** (by Epes Sargent, 1844; by Calvin Colton, 1856; by Carl Schurz, 1890, in American Statesmen Series and by others. See also Parton's *Famous Americans*). For a generation the most prominent figure in American politics was that of the great Whig leader, Henry Clay. Though a Virginian by birth and representing the State of Kentucky in the Senate, he was opposed, though not radically, to the institution of slavery. He stood midway between the extremists of both parties, and by his great tact he succeeded again and again in uniting them when irreconcilable rupture seemed inevitable. The Missouri Compromise, forbidding slavery above latitude 36° 30'; the Nullification Law of 1833; and finally the Compromise of 1850, which provided, among other things, that California should enter the Union under its own constitution, and that slavery should be abolished in the District of Columbia, are monuments to his skill as a mediator,—a skill that postponed for many years “the inevitable conflict.”

With little education and almost no literary ability, Clay was the master of a persuasive style of oratory. Tradition is unanimous in regard to his eloquence, and yet the six volumes of his printed speeches are dry and lifeless. The life-giving principle has evaporated from them. Clay's wonderful popularity and his power over audiences was due almost wholly to his magnetic personality, his enthusiasm, and his knowledge of human nature.



## JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN (1782-1850).

"Calhoun, Clay, Webster! I name them in alphabetical order. What other precedence can be assigned them? Clay, the great leader; Webster, the great orator; Calhoun, the great thinker." — *Edward Everett*.

**Life** (by J. S. Jenkins, by H. Von Holst, in American Statesmen Series, and by others. See Parton's *Famous Americans*). The leader of the South in its debate over the doctrine of States Rights was John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, who carried the doctrine to its extreme, defending vigorously the Nullification Ordinance of 1832. Maintaining that not one of the framers of the Constitution, not even Washington or Hamilton, had contemplated a form of government that would bind a State beyond its will, he contended that the Constitution was merely a compact between the States; that the States were bound only so far as they wished to be, and that any one of them might repudiate any act of Congress which it deemed illegal or unconstitutional.

Notwithstanding his radical position, the moral purity of Calhoun's life and the honesty of his convictions commanded the respect even of his opponents. His influence was very great. The impress of his severe, logical mind is upon every great political measure of his time. He was a clear thinker and a logician of the first rank. Webster said of his oratory:

"His eloquence was part of his intellectual character. It was plain, strong, terse, condensed, concise; sometimes impassioned, still always severe. Rejecting ornament, not often seeking far for

illustration, his power consisted in the plainness of his propositions, in the closeness of his logic, and in the earnestness and energy of his manner."

EDWARD EVERETT (1794-1865).

**Life** (address on the Life and Public Services of Edward Everett by R. H. Dana, Jr. See also Whipple's *Character and Characteristic Men*, and Emerson's "Life and Letters in New England"). Few Americans of any generation have made a greater impress upon their times or have filled more positions of the highest responsibility than did Edward Everett. It was not for him to wait through slow years for the opportunity for influence and power. Fame came to him with a bound. At the age of nineteen he had won a national reputation as a profound scholar and eloquent preacher; at twenty-one he was offered the chair of Greek in Harvard University, his *alma mater*.

Everett's scholarship was broad and exact. While studying in Europe preparatory to taking the Greek chair at Harvard, he was hailed by the savant Cousin, as "the best Grecian he had ever known." He brought back to America a new intellectual life. Says Emerson, who was then an undergraduate, "Germany had created criticism in vain for us until 1820, when Edward Everett returned from his five years in Europe and brought to Cambridge his rich results, which no one was so fitted by natural grace and the splendor of his rhetoric to introduce and recommend." All listened spellbound to his wisdom, as if one of the old Greeks had wandered

into the present; indeed Emerson declares that "there was an influence on the young people from the genius of Everett which was almost comparable to that of Pericles in Athens."

In 1824, Everett was elected to Congress, where he served with distinction during the stormy ten years that followed. The rest of his life was but a succession of responsible positions. As governor of Massachusetts for three terms, as Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, as president of Harvard University, as Secretary of State after the death of Webster, and as United States senator, Everett was called upon to solve some of the most perplexing problems of his day.

As a statesman, he ranks second only to Webster and Clay; as a scholar, he has had but few equals in America; as a scholarly and finished orator, he was surpassed only by Choate; and as a popular lecturer, he has never, in America at least, had an equal. With his Oration on Washington, delivered nearly one hundred and fifty times in various parts of the United States, he earned no less than ninety thousand dollars for the Mount Vernon fund, and with many of his other lectures he was no less successful.

"His orations were composed for widely differing occasions, but in each case the treatment is so masterly that one would think the subject then in hand had been the especial study of his life. But his care did not cease with the preparation; his voice, gestures, and cadences were always in harmony with his theme, so that he was absolute master of his audience."—*Underwood*.

"The great charm of Mr. Everett's orations consists not so much in any single and strongly developed intellectual trait as in that

symmetry and finish which on every page give token of the richly endowed and thorough scholar. The natural movements of his mind are full of grace, and the most indifferent sentence which falls from his pen has that simple elegance which it is as difficult to define as it is easy to perceive. His level passages are never tame, and his fine ones are never superfine. His style with matchless flexibility rises and falls with his subject and is alternately easy, vivid, elevated, ornamented, or picturesque, adapting itself to the dominant mood of the mind, as an instrument responds to the touch of a master's hand. His knowledge is so extensive and the field of his allusions so wide that the most familiar views in passing through his hands gather such a halo of luminous illustrations that their likeness seems transformed and we entertain doubts of their identity." — *G. S. Hillard*.

Among Everett's orations may be mentioned his Phi Beta Kappa Oration of 1824 on American Literature, his "Early Days of Franklin," and his Gettysburg Oration. He also wrote the life of Washington in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, the life of Stark in Sparks' *American Biography*, and several poems. His orations were collected in four volumes in 1869.

### XIII.

#### THE SECOND CREATIVE PERIOD.

1837-1861.

WITH the passing of the brilliant Knickerbocker group of writers the literary sceptre departed for a period from New York. Of the thirty-eight names selected by Poe, in 1846, as the "literati of New York," after throwing out Margaret Fuller, C. P. Cranch, Mrs. Child, and others who were only temporary residents of the city, scarcely one, aside from Halleck, Willis, Verplanck, and Duyckinck, can be found to-day outside of Griswold's collections, or the dictionaries of American biography.

Following the first creative period there came an interval of barrenness during which the future of American literature looked dark and uncertain. Holmes, with characteristic terseness, thus pictures the literary field as it appeared in 1832:

"Willis was by far the most prominent young American author. Cooper, Bryant, Dana, Halleck, Drake, had all done their best work. Longfellow was not yet conspicuous. Lowell was a school-boy. Emerson was unheard of. Whittier was beginning to make his way against the writers with better educational advantages whom he was destined to outdo and outshine. Not one of the great histories, which have done honor to our literature, had appeared. Our schoolbooks depended, so far as American authors were concerned, on extracts from the orations and speeches of Webster and Everett; on Bryant's 'Thanatopsis,' his lines 'To a

Waterfowl,' and 'The Death of the Flowers'; on Halleck's 'Marco Bozzaris,' 'Red Jacket,' and 'Burns'; on Drake's 'American Flag,' and Percival's 'Coral Grove,' and his 'Genius Sleeping' and 'Genius Waking,'—and not getting very wide awake either. These could be depended upon. A few other copies of verses might be found, but Dwight's 'Columbia, Columbia,' and Pierpont's 'Airs of Palestine,' were already effaced, as many of the favorites of our day and generation must soon be, by the great wave which the near future will pour over the sands in which they still are legible."—*Introduction to A Mortal Antipathy.*

But the interregnum was not a long one. The years between 1831 and 1839 witnessed the publication of the first books of Whittier, Sparks, Bancroft, Holmes, Hawthorne, Emerson, Prescott, Hildreth, Motley, Longfellow, and Margaret Fuller. The advent of these authors marks the opening of the "Augustan Age" of American literature.

**A Mental Revolution.**—The line that separates the age of Irving from the age of Emerson is not the result alone of a geographical shifting of the centres of literary production. The transfer of the leadership from New York to New England was rather the result of a mental revolution which changed the whole character of New England and turned into new channels the current of its thought and literature.

The narrow ideals and the fierce intolerance of the Puritans could not long endure unmodified, since every creed that runs to excess must at length suffer from a reaction. The revolt against Puritanism in England, which had been precipitated by the coronation of Charles II. had been sudden and overwhelming. In a moment the pendulum had swung from one extreme to the other.



In America the revolution was necessarily more gradual. Liberal ideas first became possible under the charter granted to Massachusetts by William III. The witchcraft delusion, with its revolting display of the worst side of Puritanism, opened the eyes of the more thoughtful and conservative. A disbelief in miracles and portents, in the doctrines of total depravity and eternal punishment, began to creep into the minds of many. The new spirit gained ground slowly but surely. Quakers, Baptists, and Catholics were allowed to build churches. Liberal preachers began to fill the pulpits of Boston. Even Harvard University, once the stronghold of Puritanism, elected a president with liberal views, and soon afterward openly joined the new movement. During the early part of the present century the revolt against Puritanism went to nearly as violent an extreme in New England as formerly it had done under Charles II. in England. Later on the revolution drifted into intellectual and humanitarian channels.

In this movement three distinct ideas, corresponding to three distinct epochs, may be recognized. The first phase commenced in dissent from the principles of Puritanism, and reached its culmination in the Unitarianism of Channing; the second phase was known by the metaphysical designation of Transcendentalism; while in its last phase the movement spent its ebbing energies in the antislavery agitation preceding the Civil War.

**1. Unitarianism.** — The Unitarian movement in America commenced in the Congregational churches of Massachusetts, at first in a veiled form under the name

of Arminianism, but in 1812 open revolt broke out, and soon the most influential churches of New England had embraced the new ideas. Showers of pamphlets and sermons, many of them of wonderful strength and excellence, were a striking characteristic of the controversy that followed. The discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, which was at first prominent, soon gave way to numberless other important discussions. But the theological side of this great debate need not concern us. It is only in its after effects that it is of interest to the student of American literature.

2. **Transcendentalism.** — (See Frothingham's *New England Transcendentalism*. Also lives of Ripley and Parker, Emerson's *Essays*, Miss Alcott's *Transcendental Wild Oats*, and White's *Philosophy of American Literature*, 46-64.) The second phase of the new intellectual movement was the Transcendentalism of Ripley and Emerson, which was a departure from Unitarianism as Unitarianism had been a departure from Calvinism. It was in reality Unitarianism modified by the philosophy of Germany and France.

To understand this strange episode in our intellectual life one must be acquainted somewhat with the spirit of the age. Every student of European and of American history will recognize the fact that the first half of the Nineteenth Century was a "breaking-away period," — a time of singular and universal restlessness. In Europe political revolutions were everywhere, except in Russia, overturning the old order of things. New ideas for the uplifting of society, of politics, of ethics, were in the

air. In Germany, the school of Kant and Fichte was introducing a new philosophy; in France, Fourier and St. Simon were explaining a new science of society whose foundations were laid upon coöperation and a community of property. The Swedish philosopher, Swedenborg, had introduced a new religious system. The Swiss reformer, Pestalozzi, was inaugurating a new era in the history of education. In medicine the discussion of homœopathy, hydropathy, and many other systems was engaging the attention of the profession; while the new sciences, so called, of mesmerism and phrenology, as introduced by Gall and Spurzheim, were creating much excitement in some circles. Coleridge and Southey and Carlyle were arousing England with the new German philosophy.

In America the increased facilities for communication with Europe led to an acquaintance with Continental thought and literature. A new impetus was given to the study of the modern languages. In 1820 Edward Everett told in glowing rhetoric of the treasures that might be found in the literature and philosophy of Germany. Channing in 1823, and Bancroft and Hedge in 1825, made eloquent pleas for an increased attention to the literatures of Europe. Numberless translations soon appeared, some of them of high rank. As a result of this contact with Continental thought, New England became infected with the restlessness that had pervaded Europe, and a singular spirit of dissent and protest, of experiment and inquiry, crept into all departments of her intellectual life.

"What a fertility of projects for the salvation of the world! One apostle thought all men should go to farming, and another that no man should buy or sell, that the use of money was the cardinal evil; another that the mischief is in our diet. . . . Others attacked the system of agriculture, the use of animal manures in farming, and the tyranny of man over brute nature; these abuses polluted his food. . . . Others assailed particular vocations, as that of the lawyer, that of the merchant, of the manufacturer, of the clergyman, of the scholar. Others attacked the institution of marriage as the fountain of social evils." — *Emerson*.

REQUIRED READING. — Emerson's "New England Reformers."

**Brook Farm.** — (See Emerson's "Life and Letters in New England"; Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*, and J. H. U. Studies, Vol. 6.) In the words of Frothingham, the historian of the movement, "it was felt at this time, 1842, that in order to live a religious and moral life in sincerity, it was necessary to leave the world of institutions and to reconstruct the social order from new beginnings." Accordingly, many of the reformers actually joined themselves into communities "where everything was common," as Lowell phrased it, "except common sense." In a short time there were as many as thirty of these organizations, each with its own peculiar regulations and ideals, but, as might have been expected, all died speedy and natural deaths.

The most famous of all these phalansteries was that at Brook Farm. This community, organized in 1842 by George Ripley as a stock company, purchased two hundred acres near West Roxbury, Massachusetts, eight miles from Boston. Among the best known of its members were Hawthorne, Charles A. Dana, and George William Curtis. Emerson and Margaret Fuller, who

were in full sympathy with the movement, made frequent visits to the farm, while Theodore Parker, A. B. Alcott, W. H. Channing, and others gave it their hearty support. "To remodel society and the world into a 'happy family,'" says Holmes, "was the aim of these enthusiasts." Channing wrote that the object of the community was to found an association "in which the members should live together as brothers, seeking one another's elevation and spiritual growth." The daily life of the community consisted of coöperative farm work, reading, lecturing, writing, and conversation. This ideal life of "plain living and high thinking" continued until 1846, when the community building burned.

Although the Brook Farm Community ended in seeming failure, its influence on American thought and literature cannot be overlooked. It brought together for a period of several years the best thinkers of New England. At no other time in our history has there been such a dwelling together of intellectual leaders. When the community scattered, its members bore away the impress of the most powerful minds of the generation.

**The Philosophical Basis** of this movement, which has been widely discussed under the name of Transcendentalism, can be explained best by Emerson, who appeared to know the most about it.

"What is popularly called Transcendentalism among us is Idealism: Idealism as it appears in 1842. As thinkers, mankind have ever been divided into two sects, — Materialists and Idealists; the first class founding on experience, the second on consciousness;



the first class beginning to think from the data of the senses, the second class perceive that the senses are not final, and say, the senses give us representations of things, but what are the things themselves, they cannot tell. The Materialist insists on facts, on history, on the force of circumstances and the animal wants of man; the Idealist on the power of thought and of will, on inspiration, on miracle, on individual culture. . . . The idealism of the present day acquired the name of transcendental from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant, who replied to the sceptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas, or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself, and he denominated them transcendental forms."—*The Transcendentalist*.

**The Dial.**—Emerson was generally recognized as the leader of the movement, although Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and George Ripley were more active in disseminating its principles. The village of Concord, the home of Emerson, Thoreau, Ripley, and Alcott, became the transcendental centre. In 1840, *The Dial* first appeared, a paper that was to be the mouthpiece of the new philosophy, edited first by Margaret Fuller, afterwards by Emerson, who contributed upwards of forty articles in prose and verse. Thoreau wrote for nearly every number, while Theodore Parker, Alcott, Ripley, James Freeman Clarke, William Ellery Channing, William Henry Channing, C. P. Cranch, and many others were frequent contributors.

"It was conceived and carried out in a spirit of boundless hope and enthusiasm. Time and a narrowing subscription list proved too hard a trial, and its four volumes remain stranded, like some



rare and curiously patterned shell which a storm of yesterday has left beyond the reach of the receding waves."— *Holmes*.

3. **Antislavery.**— The last phase of the movement towards intellectual and spiritual freedom was the abolition agitation, which, after a stormy career, was put to rest by the Civil War. It began in 1831, with Garrison's *Liberator*. The movement was

"at first religious and pious, addressing itself to the churches and clergy, and with such success that in 1835 there had been formed throughout the country not less than two thousand anti-slavery societies, whose members belonged mostly to the evangelical churches. But in that year the South became alarmed and angry and the politicians and commercial men set themselves to stem the tide of fanaticism, as they termed it. The cry of 'The Union in danger' was raised, a fierce persecution was excited, the abolitionists were mobbed in all quarters, even in Boston itself, and the two thousand antislavery societies vanished like the phantoms of a dream. The churches and the clergy, with few exceptions, bent to the storm, and the leading divines of nearly all the great sects became apologists for slavery or silent on the subject. A small body of abolitionists, however, stood firm, and held to their principles in defiance of popular rage and outrage. Their struggle changed its character, and from a protest against black slavery it became a hand-to-hand contest for white liberty of speech and of the press."— *Robert Carter*.

The Transcendentalists, though generally opposed to slavery, were not all of them abolitionists. Many of them, indeed, were openly opposed to abolition. Yet the two movements started from the same fountain head. Garrison was the leader of the movement; Whittier was its poet, Sumner its representative in Congress, Mrs. Stowe its novelist, and Wendell Phillips its orator. The work of these brave leaders closed the period.

## XIV.

### THE UNITARIAN LEADERS.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1780-1842).

“There is one word that covers every cause to which Channing devoted his talents and his heart, and that word is Freedom. Liberty is the key of his religious, his political, his philanthropic principles. Free the slave, free the serf, free the ignorant, free the sinful. Let there be no chains upon the conscience, the intellect, the pursuits, or the persons of men.” — *Bellows*.

As Channing was three years the senior of Irving, and as his life-work was nearly done at the opening of the second creative period, he belongs chronologically with the Knickerbockers. But the work of Channing cannot logically be considered apart from that of Emerson and his followers. He was the morning star that ushered in the new era, — the pioneer who made, to a large degree, the new era possible.

**Life** (by W. H. Channing, 1848; by C. T. Brooks; by Miss Peabody; by H. W. Bellows. There is a fine description of Dr. Channing in George William Curtis' *Trumps*. See also Prescott's *Miscellanies*; and Lowell's "Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing").

Channing was born in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1780, and he entered Harvard at the age of fourteen. After his graduation he spent a short time as tutor in a private family in Virginia, studied theology at Cambridge, and

in 1803 took charge of the Federal Street Church in Boston, where his sermons soon attracted wide attention on account of their solemnity, fervor, and beauty.

In 1812 occurred the separation between the two wings of the Congregational Church, but it was not until 1819, when he boldly and clearly set forth his views in the sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks at Baltimore, that Channing became the generally recognized head of the Unitarian faction, a position that he was to hold until his death. Channing's sermons during this period were eloquent and thoughtful, and in their printed form are now one of the best commentaries on Unitarianism that have ever been written. Their influence on the times cannot be overestimated. In the words of Emerson, —

“Dr. Channing whilst he lived was the star of the American church, and we then thought, if we do not still think, that he left no successor in the pulpit. He could never be reported, for his eye and voice could not be printed, and his discourses lose their best in losing them. He was made for the public; his cold temperament made him the most unprofitable private companion; but all America would have been impoverished in wanting him. We could not then spare a single word he uttered in public, not so much as the reading a lesson in Scripture or a hymn, and it is curious that his printed writings are almost a history of the times, as there was no great public interest, political, literary, or even economical (for he wrote on the tariff), on which he did not leave his brave and thoughtful opinion. A poor little invalid all his life, he is yet one of those men who indicate the power of the American race to produce greatness.” — *Life and Letters in New England*.

Channing was one of the active spirits in the Transcendentalist movement, being one of the founders of the Transcendentalist Club that originated the Brook

Farm Community. But for his death he would have been undoubtedly its most prominent leader. During his whole life he was an active antislavery worker.

**As a Writer.** — But aside from his work as a religious and social reformer in the van of a movement that was destined to accomplish great things, Channing was a man of letters of high rank, exerting an influence on pure literature in New England equalled by no one before the time of Emerson. In 1822 he visited Europe, returning full of enthusiasm, — an enthusiasm which he at once imparted to all about him. In his *Remarks on a National Literature*, 1823, he plead with eloquence for an American literature that should be free from European fetters.

“We are more and more,” he said, “a reading people. Books are already among the most powerful influences here. The question is, Shall Europe, through these, fashion us after its pleasure? Shall America be only an echo of what is thought and written under the aristocracies beyond the ocean?”

Shortly after this address Channing published in the *Christian Examiner*, the literary organ of the new church, an essay on *The Life and Character of Napoleon Bonaparte*, and in 1826 *The Character and Writings of John Milton*, a powerful production, easily the superior of the essay on the same subject which made Macaulay famous three years later. “The appearance,” says Underwood, “of these essays marks an era in American letters.” Emerson declared them “the first specimens in this country of that large criticism which in England had given power and fame to the *Edinburgh Review*.”

Their style is elegant yet simple; their judgments weighty and valuable. Throughout they give evidence of an imaginative power and a cultivated critical taste of high order. Of the same rank is Channing's essay on Fénelon and his *Self-Culture*, a work that has proved stimulating to thousands of young people.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Self-Culture* and the Essay on Milton.

The Unitarian movement was aided by some of the most scholarly and eloquent clergymen of the century. Among these were Henry Ware (1764–1845); his son Henry Ware (1794–1843), a theologian and hymn writer; Andrews Norton (1786–1853), a strong and scholarly thinker; and Orville Dewey (1794–1882), one of the profoundest thinkers of his generation. Later on the movement gained strength by the accession of men like Theodore Parker, J. S. Buckminster, and James Freeman Clarke, a voluminous writer on many subjects and a leader among the Transcendentalists. Of these later Unitarians, Buckminster, a classical scholar of high rank, exerted an influence on the moral and intellectual life of New England second only to that of Channing.

## XV.

### THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS (1).

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882).

“The sage of Concord.”

“His teachings have become part of the unconsciously acquired creed of every young American of good and gracious nature.” — *C. E. Norton*.

**Life.** — (The standard life of Emerson is that by his literary executor, J. Elliot Cabot. Dr. Holmes' shorter sketch in the American Men of Letters Series, the best estimate of Emerson that has yet appeared, is invaluable in the class room. Among the great mass of Emersoniana may be mentioned *Emerson in Concord*, by his son, Dr. Edward W. Emerson; the *Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*; Alcott's *Concord Days*; G. W. Cooke's *Ralph Waldo Emerson, his Life, Writings, and Philosophy*; Guernsey's *Sketch of Emerson*; Conway's *Emerson at Home and Abroad*; Whipple's *Recollections of Eminent Men*, and George William Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*.)

No man was ever more fortunate in his ancestry than was Ralph Waldo Emerson. On both sides, his family from early times had been remarkable for its college graduates and clergymen, all of them men of unusual character and force. His grandfather, the Rev.



William Emerson, served for many years as pastor of the Congregational Church in Concord, dwelling in the "Old Manse," which had been built for him in 1765. From its windows the old pastor had watched the fight at Concord Bridge scarce a bow-shot away. On that memorable April morning the town had been thrown into a fever of excitement by the arrival of the British regulars, some eight hundred strong.

"At first it was thought best that our men should face the enemy, as few as they were, and abide the consequences. Of this opinion, among others, was the Rev. William Emerson, the clergyman of the town, who had turned out amidst the first in the morning to animate and encourage his people by his counsel and patriotic example. 'Let us stand our ground,' said he; 'if we die, let us die here!'" — *Shattuck's History of Concord*.

William Emerson, a son of this sturdy Revolutionary hero, after graduating at Harvard in 1789, settled in Boston where, as a prominent member of the Anthology Club and pastor of the First Church, he exerted a wide influence. Here, May 25, 1803, was born Ralph Waldo Emerson. The early death of the father, in 1810, left the little family in comparative poverty, but by the heroic exertions of the mother all of the six children were enabled to obtain a good education.

By the practice of the strictest economy Emerson was able to complete the course at Harvard in 1821. Some years later, having been graduated from the Divinity School, he was ordained as colleague of the Rev. Henry Ware of the Second Church in Boston, where he labored faithfully for the next three years.

But Emerson, although a brilliant preacher, had small aptitude for pastoral work. He had little sympathy with much of the church routine. He had entered the profession almost from necessity, since it was the only one at that time which offered any attractions for the quiet, scholarly mind. In 1832 his health was in a broken condition. The death of his wife the year before had almost overwhelmed him. He found himself more and more out of sympathy with the church, and accordingly, after a thoughtful sermon on the Communion, he resigned his pastorate, and the next year made a voyage to Europe on account of his health, though he afterwards wrote: "It was mainly the attraction of three or four writers, of whom Carlyle was one, that led me to Europe." In Italy he found Walter Savage Landor. In England he met Coleridge, De Quincey, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. With Carlyle, who at this time was almost unknown, Emerson formed a most pleasing friendship, one almost without precedent in our literary history. "I shall never forget the visitor," said Mrs. Carlyle, "who years ago in the desert descended on us out of the clouds, as it were, and made one day there look like enchantment for us, and left me weeping that it was only one day." The correspondence between Carlyle and Emerson, which was continued during their lifetime, is of the greatest value. Nowhere else can one get so near the real lives of these two intellectual leaders. The correspondence is a strong connecting link between the literatures of the two nations.

SUGGESTED READING.— *The Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence.*

Upon his return to America Emerson made his first appearance as a popular lecturer. In 1834 he removed to Concord, the ancestral home of the family, living at first in the "Old Manse," and in this quiet little village the rest of his life was spent.

The life of Emerson, like that of the scholar generally, had few striking incidents. Aside from his lecture tours and two more visits to Europe, one in 1847, the other in 1872, his life was passed quietly in his rural home. There can be no better picture of his private life than that drawn by his own pen in a letter to Carlyle dated May 10, 1838.

"I occupy, or improve, as we Yankees say, two acres only of God's earth; on which is my house, my kitchen garden, my orchard of thirty young trees, my empty barn. My house is now a very good one for comfort and abounding in room. Besides my house I have, I believe, \$22,000, whose income in ordinary years is six per cent. I have no other tithe or glebe except the income of my winter lectures which was last winter \$800. Well, with this income, here at home I am a rich man. I stay at home, and go abroad, at my own instance. I have food, warmth, leisure, books, friends. Go away from home, I am rich no longer. I never have a dollar to spend on a fancy. As no wise man, I suppose, ever was rich in the sense of freedom to spend, because of the inundations of claims, so neither am I, who am not wise. But at home I am rich, — rich enough for ten brothers.

"My wife Lidian is an incarnation of Christianity, — I call her Asia, — and keeps my philosophy from Antinomianism; my mother, — whitest, mildest, most conservative of ladies, whose only exception to her universal preference for old things is her son; my boy a piece of love and sunshine, well worth my watching from morning to night; these and three domestic women who cook and sew and run for us, make all our household. Here I sit and read and write, with very little system, and as far as regards composition, with the most fragmentary result: paragraphs incompressible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle.

"In summer, with the aid of a neighbor, I manage my garden ; and a week ago I set out, on the west side of my house, forty young pine trees to protect me, or my son, from the wind of January. The ornament of the place is the occasional presence of some ten or twelve persons, good and wise, who visit us in the course of the year."

As the years went by, the home of Emerson became the literary centre of America. Margaret Fuller and *The Dial* group often met there ; Thoreau was a daily visitor ; Alcott and Hawthorne were near neighbors, while all the prominent authors of America, and distinguished guests from every land, found entertainment under its hospitable roof.

Emerson's working life ended in 1867. The year before he had written the sad sweet poem "Terminus," which was, in a sense, his valedictory to the world. His memory gradually failed him. He delighted to read, but he immediately forgot all as soon as he had laid the book aside. "My memory hides itself," he said ; yet, assisted by his daughter Ellen, he continued to lecture almost to the time of his death. Fully conscious as he was of his failing powers, he did not complain, though a few months before his death he made the sad remark "when one's wits begin to leave him it is time the heavens opened and took him to themselves."

He died in April, 1882, and was buried in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at Concord, under the same pines beneath which rest Hawthorne and Thoreau.

**Nature.**—The little book *Nature*, written in the "Old Manse" and published in September, 1836,—Emerson's first real message to the world,—remains

the most intense of all his writings. Although it met with an indifferent reception, selling in twelve years only five hundred copies, it was, nevertheless, an epoch-making book. It is vague and incomprehensible to the practical mind; it soars at times into regions where only a few can follow, but it opens a new vista to those who can understand it. Starting with the assumption that the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul, Emerson considers their relations, and the ministry of nature to the senses; the office of love and beauty; the derivation of languages from nature and the influence of nature upon the intellect, the moral sense, and the will. As he proceeds, he falls more and more into the language of rhapsody. He dwells upon the principles of Idealism, expressing doubts as to the existence of matter, thus planting the first seeds of Transcendentalism; he shows that natural and spiritual laws are identical, and discusses the problems of necessity and human freedom, aiming a blow at Calvinism. "It fell like an aerolite," says Holmes, "unasked for, unaccounted for, unexpected, almost unwelcome, — a stumbling-block to be got out of the well-trodden highway of New England scholastic intelligence." The date of its publication may be taken as the opening of a new era in American thought.

Just one year after the publication of *Nature*, Emerson delivered the oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Cambridge, on "Man Thinking or the American Scholar." In this oration he touched again upon the leading points of his essay *Nature*, but with none of



the vagueness and mysticism of that work. One critic declares that in it nearly all of Emerson's leading ideas found expression. Its effect was electrical. In the words of Lowell, "It was an event without any former parallel in our literary annals—a scene to be always treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles! What windows clustering with eager heads!" Dr. Holmes called it "our intellectual Declaration of Independence."

REQUIRED READING. — "The American Scholar."

**Emerson's Essays.** — Nearly all of Emerson's prose work was first given to the public in the form of lectures. He was pre-eminently a lecturer, never once in all his writings forgetting that he was addressing an audience. After tiring of one lecture, he would lay it aside and begin another. When enough had collected to make a small volume, he would revise and polish them with care and in due time give them to the world in book form.

The most of Emerson's essays have single words for titles. Often the subject is only a starting-point from

*Essays, First Series.* 1841.  
*Essays, Second Series.* 1844.  
*Representative Men.* 1850.  
*Conduct of Life.* 1860.  
*Society and Solitude.* 1870.  
*Letters and Social Aims.* 1875.

which the author makes excursions into wide and rich fields. All of his work is discursive in its nature, so much so that one can find a thought from him on almost every subject imaginable. His sentences are well-nigh perfect in form, yet they do not always yield their meaning without a mental struggle on the part of the reader,



nor did Emerson intend that they should. To read him intelligently one must think, and think carefully. Emerson's essays teach the reader mental alertness; they lead him into new fields where he must shift for himself; they open new vistas and furnish new ideas. More young men and women have learned to think through the influence of Emerson than through that of any other modern writer.

REQUIRED READING. — "Self-Reliance," "Friendship," "Manners," "Compensation," "History," "Character."

**Representative Men.** — In 1847 Emerson made a lecture tour through the principal cities of England, and three years later he selected seven of these lectures to be published under the title *Representative Men*. These were, in order, "The Uses of Great Men"; "Plato, or the Philosopher"; "Swedenborg, or the Mystic"; "Montaigne, or the Skeptic"; "Shakespeare, or the Poet"; "Napoleon, or the Man of the World"; and "Goethe, or the Writer."

This book should be read in connection with Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. Nowhere else have we such good ground for a comparison between the two authors, for here both were on the same ground. Like Carlyle, Emerson delighted in men of power, in masters of the situation, in masters of men. But the list of heroes chosen by each is characteristic. Swedenborg and Montaigne would have been the last men chosen by Carlyle, who seems to have chosen his heroes — Mahomet, Dante, Luther, Burns, Cromwell — on account of their positiveness, their sincerity to a great principle. No-

where else do Emerson's prejudices and opinions show forth more clearly. The book may be regarded as his strongest and most characteristic work.

Like Hawthorne, Emerson succeeded in producing a bright and readable book of his impressions of English life and character. This work, which appeared in 1850 under the title *English Traits*, does not attempt, like a guide-book, to give a consecutive account of its author's journeyings. It is rather the note-book of an observer and thinker,—full of skilful touches and thoughtful deductions. No more fearless and faithful characterization of the English people has ever been written by an American. Aside from a few of his poems, like "Good Bye," "To Ellen," "Walden," "Dirge," "Threnody," and "Terminus," *English Traits* is the only autobiographical fragment from Emerson's pen.

**Emerson's Prose Style.**—(Lowell's *My Study Windows*; Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, Series II.; Morley's *Critical Miscellanies*; Stedman, V.; Richardson, I., 330–370; Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*.) Emerson's style may be characterized by the word epigrammatic. His essays are collections of brilliant, often aphoristic, sentences, joined loosely together. One may open his books at random, and almost without fail alight upon a sentence that might stand alone. Upon his sentences Emerson expended the most painstaking toil, polishing them as a lapidary does a gem. He chose his words with minutest care, weighing each one and always choosing the one best fitted to express his precise thought. He was a master of condensation; his sentences are "incom-

pressible." But where Emerson was weak was in combining power. His essays are mosaics. They read often, as an English critic once said, as if their sentences had been drawn at random from a hat and patched together. Emerson himself once confessed: "In writing my thoughts I seek no order or harmony or result. I am not careful to see how they comport with other thoughts and other moods. I trust them for that."

It is interesting to know Emerson's methods of composition. It was his practice

"When a sentence had taken shape, to write it out in his journal, and leave it to find its fellows afterwards. These journals, paged and indexed, were the quarry from which he built his lectures and essays. When he had a paper to get ready, he took the material collected under the particular heading, and added whatever suggested itself at the moment. The proportion thus added seems to have varied considerably; it was large in the early time, say to about 1846, and sometimes very small in the later essays." — *Cabot's Emerson*.

But when the critic of Emerson's prose style has complained of the want of arrangement of the essays and the lack of coherence between the parts, he has generally very little more to add. T. W. Higginson, after observing that "some of his essays are like accidental collections of loose leaves from a note-book," makes haste to say, "As one makes this criticism, one is shamed into silence by remembering many a passage of prose and verse so majestic in thought and rhythm, of quality so rare and utterance so delicious, as to form a permanent addition to the highest literature of the human race"; and Lowell, our greatest literary critic, once

wrote: "A diction at once so rich and homely as his, I know not where to match in these days of writing by the page; it is like homespun cloth of gold. The many cannot miss its meaning, and only the few can find it."

**Emerson as a Poet.** — (Stedman, Ch. V.; Richardson, II. 137–171; Whipple's *American Literature*; Joel Benton's *Emerson as a Poet*; Burroughs' *Birds and Poets*.) Though Emerson's influence was exerted mainly through his prose, he wrote enough poems to make a good-sized volume, and by many he is considered to be our greatest poet. "If he is a poet," says one critic, "he is our greatest poet," but whether or not he is a poet depends upon the definition of the terms "poet" and "poetry," and every one may insist on his own definition. Dr. Holmes, than whom no other is more competent to judge, thus describes Emerson's poetical limitations:

"Full of poetic feeling and with a strong desire for poetical expression, Emerson experienced a difficulty in the mechanical part of metrical composition. His Muse picked her way as his speech did in conversation and in lecturing. He made desperate work now and then with rhyme and rhythm, showing that though a born poet he was not a born singer. Think of making 'feeble' rhyme with 'people,' 'abroad' with 'Lord,' and contemplate the following couplet which one cannot make rhyme without actual verbiage:

'Where feeds the moose and walks the surly bear  
And up the tall mast runs the woodpeck-are.'

His verses are often fragmentary in style, like his prose; sometimes they have a simple, monotonous cadence like the note of a forest bird; many of them are

little oracular sayings of a single thought, where the thought is perfect, but the vehicle homely and awkward. The greater number of his poems deal with themes of the loftiest kind. The average reader sees not the least sense in "Brahma," "The Over Soul," and "Hamatreya," which are so packed with thought that to the thoughtless they seem mere nonsense.

But after criticising his sense of melody and his occasional mysticism, the reader of Emerson's poems has little ground left for accusation. No one can deny that he had a brilliant imagination, a sensitive sense of beauty, and keen poetic insight. Even his prose is full of poetry.

He used the poetic form sparingly and only for his most perfect thoughts. He spoke ever in verse when he wished to speak at his best. No one can know the purest and most ethereal part of Emerson's domain until he has lived for a season with Emerson's poems. He is not always inartistic and obscure. Many of his poems are as clear as light, and as musical as any in the language. "The Snow Storm," "The Humble Bee," "The Rhodora," and "Concord Hymn," judged by any standard whatever, are well-nigh perfect. The "Concord Hymn," sung at the dedication of the battle monument, April 19, 1836, is in itself enough to place its author in the front rank of poets.

REQUIRED READING. — "The Rhodora," "The Humble Bee," "The Snow Storm," "Brahma," "Concord Hymn."

**The Influence of Emerson.** — No other writer has done more for the independence of American thought. "We

were," said Lowell, "still socially and intellectually moored to English thought till Emerson cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and glories of blue water." His impress is upon much of the best literature of our times. Many who are now intellectual leaders first learned to think from perusing his pages. Upon the circle of his friends, who listened to his words as to those of a sage, Emerson's influence was very great.

"One had to be more than human to remain in the presence of such a nature and not betray the fact. Thoreau felt the perilous singling until his tones and his mode of speaking caught the trick of Emerson so nearly that the two men could hardly be separated in conversation. What wonder that Channing, Bartol, Alcott, and the rest, strong and stately men, . . . felt, to some slight deflection of their orbit, the unintentional, if not unconscious, attraction of the mild Jupiter so near them. Hawthorne and Margaret Fuller fled and saved themselves, but even they betrayed during their Concord residence a faint Emersonian adumbration. The fact is, no one meeting Emerson was ever the same again. His natural force was so restless and so imperceptible that it commanded men before they were aware. . . . Concord contained, during Emerson's solstitial years, a great lighthouse, shining far and wide, and showing many ships their goal, but covered with the shreds of wrecked barks which had been attracted by its clear, cold, solitary flame." — *Charles J. Woodbury.*



## XVI.

### THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS (2).

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862).

“The poet naturalist.”

“A Yankee Stoic, holding fast the most lofty ideals, and aiming always to reduce life to its simplest terms.” — *Burroughs*.

**Life.** — (The standard life of Thoreau is that contributed by F. B. Sanborn to the American Men of Letters Series. The best short study of his life is Emerson's Memoir. See also Emerson's "Woodnotes"; John Burroughs' *Indoor Studies*; Lowell's *Among my Books*; H. A. Page's *Thoreau: his Life and Aims*, and W. E. Channing's *Thoreau: the Poet Naturalist*. The greater part of Thoreau's writings are autobiographical in their nature, and from them alone a complete outline of his life-work and character may be drawn.)

Of the remarkable group of writers that made of Concord a literary centre during the age of Emerson, Thoreau alone was a native of the town. No one of the others identified himself so completely with the little village. To him Concord was the centre of the universe, and from this standpoint he looked out upon the world and its history. It pleased him to believe that all the phenomena of nature, from the tropics to the

pole, could be observed about the shores of Walden Pond.

The surroundings of Thoreau's boyhood, like those of the poet Whittier, were unliterary and unencouraging. His father, a retired merchant of small means, who was earning a scanty income at the somewhat unusual trade of lead-pencil making, could give his children no luxuries. And yet, through the strictest economy, Thoreau was able to attend the village school of Concord and later even to enter Harvard University, where he was graduated in 1837, "but," as Emerson says. "without any literary distinction." With characteristic independence he neglected all studies that he deemed unimportant, thoroughly mastering, however, all that in any way appealed to his taste. He cared nothing for honors, even refusing at last to take his diploma, declaring it not worth the five dollars.

After leaving college he taught for a time in the academy at Concord, and soon afterward applied himself to the mastering of his father's craft; but having learned at last to make a perfect pencil, he declared he would make no more. Emerson, alluding to this period, says that Thoreau now "resumed his endless walks and miscellaneous studies, making every day some new acquaintance with nature, though as yet never speaking of zoölogy or botany, since, though very studious of natural facts, he was incurious of technical and textual science."

The story of these "endless walks" is the story of the rest of Thoreau's life. He entered no profession.

The little money that he needed he earned by land surveying, gardening, and fence building, but, whatever his occupation, he managed, winter and summer, to spend half at least of every day in the woods and fields. The only variations in his life were when he gave an occasional lecture or made an excursion to the Maine woods, to Canada, or Cape Cod, from which he returned with a sigh of relief to his native Walden.

**A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers.** — Two years after his graduation from Harvard, Thoreau, accompanied by his brother John, made, in a small boat of their own construction, a voyage down the Concord and Merrimac rivers. From this experience grew his first book, published ten years later.

“The book is an account of a voyage on far other and larger rivers than those named in the title. The rows down the Concord and Merrimac but furnish the occasion for the author to launch forth upon diverse streams of opinion and speculation, in religion, literature, and philosophy. The ‘Week’ is really a collection of essays tied together by a slight thread of travel. It is not very readable, though it contains some of Thoreau’s best prose and poetry. But the two elements he has put into it do not go well together. A book of travels is a book of adventure and observation, and the reader does not like to be detained by long dissertations upon entirely irrelevant subjects. The temptation to skip them and be off down stream with the voyagers is almost irresistible.”  
—*John Burroughs.*

As the book did not sell, the publishers sent to the author nearly the whole edition. It was then that he made the remark that he had a library of nine hundred volumes, seven hundred of which he had written himself.

**Walden.** — Thoreau's life has been called a sermon from Emerson's text, "Lessen your denominator." In an age of extravagance and waste, he showed to the world how few the real wants of humanity are. But, like many reformers, he carried his views to an extreme. He condemned the complex machinery of society; he refused to pay his tax and was put into jail in consequence; he never voted, never went to church; he determined to get at the elementary conditions of existence and to strip himself of everything not absolutely essential. With this end in view, Thoreau, in 1845, built with his own hands a small house on the shore of Walden Pond, a short distance from Concord, and there he lived in solitude for two years and two months, his expenses for the time being \$68.76, or about nine cents a day.

While this was, as Thoreau intended it to be, a sermon on economy, a rebuke to the extravagant demands of the age, it did not, by any means, attack the deep foundations upon which society rests. No one can utterly ignore the demands of civilization without becoming a wild beast or a savage. Thoreau, even in his hut at Walden, was holden in a thousand ways to society.

"He squatted on another man's land; he borrows an axe; his boards, his nails, his bricks, his mortar, his books, his lamp, his fish-hooks, his plough, his hoe, all turn state's evidence against him as an accomplice in the sin of that artificial civilization which rendered it possible that such a man as Henry D. Thoreau should exist at all." — *Lowell*.

*Walden*, which contains a minute account of the two years at Walden Pond, is Thoreau's best book. It is

full of the wild aroma of the woods. In no other book can one come so close to Nature's heart. We hear in it the weird cry of the loons over the water; we watch the frolics of the squirrels; we observe the thousand phenomena of the wonderful little lake; we listen to the forest sounds by day and by night; we study the tell-tale snow; we watch, with bated breath, a battle to the death between two armies of ants. For minute and loving descriptions of the woods and fields, *Walden* has had no rival.

Thoreau began to keep a journal as early as 1835, and throughout the rest of his life it was his custom to record with minute care the thoughts and observations of each day. As a result, he left at his death thirty manuscript volumes which tell the complete story of his life. Only the two books mentioned above were published during his lifetime, but since his death these journals have been drawn upon for eight volumes more, and without doubt other volumes may yet appear. Of these *The Maine Woods* and *Cape Cod* contain some of his freshest and most agreeable work.

*Excursions in  
Field and  
Forest.*

*The Maine  
Woods.*

*Cape Cod.*

*Letters to Vari-  
ous Persons.*

*A Yankee in  
Canada.*

*Early Spring in  
Massachusetts.*

*Summer.*

*Winter.*

REQUIRED READING. — *Walden*, and *The Maine Woods*.

**His Nearness to Nature.** — Thoreau combined the fine instincts and the woodcraft of the Indian with the eye and brain of the philosopher. He knew every square rod of the Concord woods. He knew Walden Pond and the hills about it as a farmer knows his kitchen garden. He had studied them for years, both by day and night.

“It was a pleasure and privilege to walk with him. He knew the country like a fox or a bird, and passed through it as freely by paths of his own. He knew every track in the snow, or on the ground, and what creature had taken this path before him. One must submit abjectly to such a guide, and the reward was great. Under his arm he carried an old music book to press plants; in his pocket his diary and pencil, a spyglass for birds, microscope, jack-knife, and twine. . . . On the day I speak of he looked for the *Menyanthes*, detected it across the wide pool, and, on examination of the florets, decided that it had been in flower five days. He drew out of his breast pocket his diary, and read the names of all the plants that should bloom on this day, whereof he kept account as a banker when his notes fall due. The *Cypripedium* not due till to-morrow. He thought that if he waked up from a trance in this swamp, he could tell by the plants what time of the year it was within two days. . . . He saw as with microscope, heard as with ear-trumpet, and his memory was a photographic register of all he saw and heard. . . . His intimacy with animals suggested what Thomas Fuller records of Butler the apiologist, that ‘either he had told the bees things, or the bees had told him.’ Snakes coiled round his leg; the fishes swam into his hand, and he took them out of the water; he pulled the woodchuck out of its hole by the tail, and took the foxes under his protection from the hunters.” — *Emerson*.

**His Prose Style.** — Thoreau showed in a very marked degree the influence of Emerson. His biographer, who knew him personally, says that he imitated Emerson’s tones and manners so that it was annoying to listen to him. Unconsciously he acquired Emerson’s style of writing. He became a master of the short, epigrammatic sentence. Yet there is often a rudeness and an inartistic carelessness about Thoreau’s style that is not at all like Emerson. No one has ever excelled him in the field of minute description. His acute powers of observation, his ability to keep for a long time his attention



upon one thing, and his love of nature and of solitude, all lend a distinct individuality to his style.

But while Thoreau was to a certain degree stamped by the more powerful mind of Emerson, it is certain that the latter was much influenced by Thoreau. Emerson was blind to less obvious processes of nature until Thoreau opened his eyes. Thus it was with all who came in contact with this prophet of the woods and fields. It has been Thoreau's mission to open blind eyes, to show the tragedies, the comedies, the things of beauty, the marvels and the mysteries, that lie about each one of us in field and forest, unseen until we learn to see them. He was the parent of the out-of-door school of writers represented by John Burroughs, Frank Bolles, Bradford Torrey, Olive Thorne Miller, Maurice Thompson, and many others.

REQUIRED READING.—Emerson's "Woodnotes."

## XVII.

### THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS (3).

#### THE DIAL GROUP.

AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT (1799-1888).

“A pure idealist, not at all a man of letters, nor of any practical talent, nor a writer of books; a man quite too cold and contemplative for the alliances of friendship, with rare simplicity and grandeur of perception, who read Plato as an equal, and inspired his companions only in proportion as they were intellectual.” — *Emerson*.

A UNIQUE figure in an age of singular personalities was Amos Bronson Alcott, perhaps the most perfect representative of Transcendentalism. He was a mystic and a man of visions. In his ideas of reform he went farther than any of his companions. He remained a vegetarian all his life; he denounced the use of animal manures in agriculture; he insisted for a time that only white clothes should be worn; he devoted himself to several sweeping reforms in education and religion, and he attempted to found on his own responsibility a community like that at Brook Farm, where he might carry into practice his ideas of social and moral reform.

It was principally through the efforts of Alcott that the Transcendental Club was formed in 1836, an organization that held meetings at irregular intervals until as late as 1850. Upon its roll were such names as

Dr. Channing, Emerson, Ripley, Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Theodore Parker, George Bancroft, Dr. Hedge, C. A. Bartol, O. A. Brownson, Miss E. P. Peabody, C. P. Cranch, Dr. Follen, James Freeman Clarke, W. H. Channing, and others. From this club grew *The Dial*.

*Tablets*. 1868.

*Concord Days*. 1872.

*Table Talk*. 1877.

*Sonnets and Canzonets*. 1879.

Like Margaret Fuller, Alcott is remembered more from his influence upon his contemporaries than from his writings. As a conversationalist he has had few superiors. Lowell, in his *Fable for Critics*, says :

“ And indeed, I believe, no man ever talked better.  
 Each sentence hangs perfectly poised to a letter ;  
 He seems piling words, but there’s royal dust hid  
 In the heart of each sky-piercing pyramid.  
 While he talks he is great, but goes out like a taper  
 If you shut him up closely with pen, ink, and paper.”

He travelled widely at one time, giving “ Conversations,” as he chose to call his lectures, and with these he gained a wide circle of admirers. His first writings, which were contributed to *The Dial* under the title of “ Orphic Sayings,” are obscure in the extreme, — Emerson’s “ Brahma ” is sun-clear compared with them. His volumes are fragmentary and without great value, although *Concord Days* gives now and then a charming glimpse of Emerson and his circle. His last volume, published in his eightieth year, is made up of personal poems written to or about his various friends.

His daughter, **Louisa May Alcott** (1832–1888), wrote many charming books for young people. Her first suc-

cess was with *Hospital Notes*, a collection of her letters written during her life as an army nurse. These at once moved the popular heart in the North, and when, in 1867, her *Little Women* appeared, her name at once became a household word in America. Among her numerous other books may be mentioned *An Old-Fashioned Girl*, 1869; *Little Men*, 1871; and *Spinning-Wheel Stories*, 1884. (See Mrs. E. D. Cheney's *Louisa May Alcott; her Life, Letters, and Journals*, 1892.)

Alcott died in Concord, March 4, 1888, and his daughter followed him only two days later.

#### MARGARET FULLER OSSOLI (1810-1850).

"If Emerson was the soul of the Concord movement, Margaret Fuller was the blood."

"Some of her papers were the undeniable utterances of a true, heroic mind; altogether unique, so far as I know, among the writing women of this generation; rare enough, God knows, among the writing men." — *Carlyle*.

**Life.** — (The most complete life of Margaret Fuller is that contributed by Thomas Wentworth Higginson to the American Men of Letters Series. *The Memoirs of Margaret Fuller*, by Emerson, W. H. Channing, and J. F. Clarke, which treat her life from the Transcendental standpoint, appeared in 1852. Many others, including Poe, Bayard Taylor, and Horace Greeley, have written memoirs or criticisms of her life and work. Hawthorne's caustic sketch of her is preserved in Julian Hawthorne's *Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife*; the character "Zenobia" in *The Blithedale Romance* is a study of her

as she appeared at Brook Farm; Lowell cleverly caricatured her in the *Fable for Critics* under the name "Miranda." See also Julia Ward Howe's *Memoir* in the Eminent Women Series, 1882, and Parton's *Life of Horace Greeley*.)

In many respects Margaret Fuller stands, like Poe, solitary in our literature. Her strong, masculine personality which placed her alone among American women, and her keen, peculiar intellect which made her a powerful influence on the intellectual men of her generation, defy classification. If judged alone by her actual literary product, she would deserve but a passing notice, yet she is ranked with the great builders of American literature. Concerning few American writers, save Poe and Whitman, can one find such extremes of opinion. Some of her contemporaries characterized her as superficially learned, disagreeable, warped by intense personal likes and dislikes, domineering, oracular, inordinately fond of monologue; while others, like Emerson, Carlyle, Channing, and Higginson, declared her a rare genius, a profound thinker and scholar, a fountain of "wit, anecdote, love stories, tragedies, oracles"; "the queen of some parliament of love, who carried the key to all confidences and to whom every question had been finally referred." To these she seemed to breathe out constantly "an ineffably sweet, benign, tenderly humane, and serenely high spirit." She is almost the only American author who, like a great singer or actor, keeps a place in our memories chiefly through the testimony of contemporaries.

Before criticizing Margaret Fuller's life and character, one must take into consideration her early education. Her father, a scholarly man, spared no efforts to make her a youthful prodigy. Her brain was terribly stimulated. At the age of six she was poring over Latin verbs; at eight she was eagerly reading Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Molière, and before she was twelve she had become familiar with the leading masterpieces of the Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and English. She was, consequently, in a few years a phenomenon of learning, "but was paying the penalty for undue application in near-sightedness, awkward manners, extravagant tendencies of thought, and a pedantic style of talk."

In 1840, when she became editor of *The Dial*, Margaret Fuller was regarded as the most intellectual woman of America. She had read deeply in the literature of Germany, and the German philosophy was at her tongue's end. The year before she had translated Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*, and the following year she completed a translation of *The Letters of Gûnderode and Bettine*. In every way she was fitted to become the oracle of the Transcendentalist movement. Her literary life, which now began, may be divided into three periods. The first may be termed the Transcendental period, during which time she published two books: *Summer on the Lakes*, the journal of an excursion to Lake Superior in 1843, and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, which had originally appeared in *The Dial* under the title, "The Great Lawsuit." The first, which is in many respects her most literary work,



excels in descriptive power. Her condensed and graphic pictures of Niagara, of the wild regions about the Great Lakes, which were then on the borders of civilization, of frontier life in its summer dress, of the boundless prairies, of the rapidly advancing tide of civilization, abound in life and beauty. Her *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is full of force and earnestness. She was, in the words of Greeley's introduction to the work, "one of the earliest as well as ablest among American women to demand for her sex equality before the law with her titular lord and master." The book is bold and strenuous, and is still readable.

The second period in Margaret Fuller's career opened in 1844, when she removed to New York City to become literary editor of Greeley's *Tribune*. During the twenty months of her connection with this paper she produced her strongest work. As a critic she had rare powers, and her *Papers on Literature and Art*, collected from *The Tribune* and published in 1846, furnish the best basis that we have for an estimate of her powers. "She could appreciate, but not create."

In 1846 she went to Europe and after travelling extensively in England and on the Continent found herself, in 1847, in Rome. Six months later she became the wife of the Italian Marquis Ossoli, a near friend of Mazzini the patriot. She was present in Rome during the Revolution of 1848 and a year later during the French siege of the city, when she rendered invaluable assistance in the hospitals. In 1850 she sailed for America with her husband and child, but the ship was wrecked

in sight of the American coast and all were lost. The literary result of this last period of her life, a history of Rome, perished with its author.

The place which Margaret Fuller will ultimately occupy in the history of American letters can only be conjectured. "Her genius was not quick to clothe itself in the written word," and it seems but fair to judge that any literary fame that rests largely upon tradition must ultimately be lost. Her genius lay in her personal influence. She held frequent "Conversations," during which her admirers listened with bated breath as to a goddess. She drew about her with scarcely an effort a circle of the purest and most spiritual men and women of New England and she ruled it with singular power. And after her death the noblest and best minds of both hemispheres united to do honor to her memory.

SUGGESTED READING. — Emerson's *Memoir*.

**George Ripley** (1802–1880). — (O. B. Frothingham in *American Men of Letters Series*.) Although a scholar of great metaphysical and theological acuteness, and a critic of high rank exerting through the last years of his life a powerful influence as literary editor of the *New York Tribune*, George Ripley is chiefly remembered as the founder of the Brook Farm Community. Into this idea he threw all of his tremendous zeal and energy. He resigned his pulpit in Boston to devote his whole time to it, and for it he labored with earnestness and self-denial. He was the motive power of the movement.

With Charles A. Dana (b. 1819) Ripley edited

the *New American Cyclopædia*, a work begun in 1855 and finished in 1863.

**Theodore Parker** (1810–1860), the representative of Transcendentalism in the pulpit, was a man of intense convictions and great activity, a prominent figure in all the reforms of his day. His work in every humanitarian field was tremendous and his influence was correspondingly great. Although he wrote enough to fill ten volumes, it was never with a literary intent. He was a man of action rather than a producer of literature.

**William Henry Channing** (1810–1885), a clergyman of much power and influence, became best known in America as a vigorous antislavery orator. For a time he was prominently connected with the Transcendentalist Club, and he contributed several pieces to *The Dial*. He edited the life and correspondence of his uncle, Dr. Channing, and wrote a memoir of Margaret Fuller, besides many other works. He went to England in 1854, and three years later accepted the pastorate of the Hope Street Chapel, Liverpool. With the exception of several years passed in Washington during the Civil War, he made England his home until his death. His eldest daughter is the wife of the English poet, Edwin Arnold.

See Life by O. B. Frothingham.

**William Ellery Channing** (b. 1818), another nephew of Dr. Channing, an intimate friend of Thoreau and Hawthorne, has published five volumes of poems and a somewhat rhapsodical study of the life and character of Thoreau.

**Christopher Pearse Cranch** (1813–1891), a native of Virginia and a member of the class of 1832 in Columbia College, gained renown as a landscape painter, poet and translator. His poems often have a rare melody and many of his sonnets are nearly faultless. His translation of Virgil's *Æneid* ranks with the great translations of the century.

**Jones Very** (1813–1880), a Unitarian minister of Salem, Massachusetts, characterized by Lowell as the "most Hebrew of Saxons," became pre-eminently the poet of Transcendentalism on its mystical side. His form of expression was chiefly the sonnet, which he brought to a high degree of perfection.

"Religion has informed the sonnet nowhere else with deeper meanings. Sometimes the mysticism baffles comprehension, but many times the meaning is as fresh and clear as any mountain brook, and not infrequently as colorless and cold. Some of these sonnets have long since passed over into the religious consciousness of New England worshippers. They have been adapted to the Sunday service in the form of hymns and chants."—*J. W. Chadwick*.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS (1824–1892).

"A Puritan Cavalier."

Among the younger men who entered the Brook Farm Community as students, Charles A. Dana and

*Nile Notes of a  
Howadji.*

*The Howadji in  
Syria.*

*Lotus-Eating.*

*Potiphar Pa-  
pers.*

George William Curtis have won for themselves literary distinction. Dana, after editing *The Tribune* from 1847 to 1862, during which time the paper became the chief organ of the antislavery movement,

founded in 1868 the New York *Sun*, of which he is still editor (1895); while Curtis by his sunny books of travel, his graceful essays and novels, his wonderful oratory, his broad culture, and his stainless life, became one of the great intellectual influences of his time.

**Life** (by Edward Carey, in American Men of Letters Series. See also William Winter's address on the life and character of George William Curtis). George William Curtis was born in Providence, Feb. 24, 1824. After attending school for a time at Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, he removed in 1839 with his parents to New York, where for a year he was clerk in a mercantile house in that city. He was at Brook Farm eighteen months, and, attracted by the magnetism of Emerson, he passed eighteen months more in Concord, working a part of each day on a farm and devoting the rest to study.

In 1846 he went abroad, and for the next four years he travelled widely in Europe, Egypt, and Syria. On his return he published two graceful volumes of travel, *Nile Notes of a Howadji* (1851), and *The Howadji in Syria* (1852), full of the gorgeous coloring and the dreamy atmosphere of the Orient. Delicate humor, quaint fancy, and rare refinement breathe from every page. These rare qualities, mingled with his descriptions and adventures, combine to make the "Howadji" volumes the most charming of their kind in our literature.

During the summer of 1852 Curtis contributed to

*The Tribune* a series of letters full of sentiment, poetical description, and reflection written from Saratoga, Newport, and Lake George, which were soon afterward republished under the title *Lotus-Eating: a Summer Book*. During the same year he became connected with the newly founded *Putnam's Monthly*, and shortly afterward found himself sole editor of the magazine. By the failure of the monthly in 1857, he lost his entire fortune. From the columns of *Putnam's* he republished in 1853 *The Potiphar Papers*, a series of caustic satires on the hollowness and sham of New York society life, and in 1856 *Prue and I*, a series of sketches and essays connected by a slight thread of story. This volume, one of his daintiest creations, would have been a credit to Charles Lamb at his best. Curtis attempted but one novel, *Trumps*, which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1862.

REQUIRED READING.—*Prue and I*.

After his return from the East Curtis was for a time editor of *The Tribune*. In 1853 he started in *Harper's Magazine* the series of essays on current topics known as "The Easy Chair," a department which he conducted almost without intermission until his death. The three volumes of *Essays from the Easy Chair*, which have been collected and republished since their author's death, are a rare addition to American prose literature. In them are treated from a contemporary standpoint all of the great events of a peculiarly eventful half-century. Here and there we catch charming glimpses



of Dickens and Thackeray, of Emerson and Thoreau, of Edward Everett and Wendell Phillips, of Jennie Lind,—and indeed of all the chief personages of the time, while mingled with it all are delightful satires on the foibles and fashions, the flippancy and selfishness of the day. “In them Mr. Curtis’ style has thrown off the sensuousness of youth for the richness of maturity; it is flushed with color, but of a deeper hue than that which ran mænad-like through *Nile Notes*.”

As the editor of *Harper’s Weekly* during thirty-five eventful years, Curtis exerted a wide-spread influence both on literature and politics. His position in 1884, when he “bolted” the Republican party and became the leader of a powerful independent faction, is well known. He was chairman of the first Civil Service Commission and also chairman of the New York Constitutional Convention; he declined, in 1876, the Missions to England and to Germany, both of which were offered to him, and he also declined at various times many other responsible positions.

As an orator he stands with the highest. “He was the last great orator,” says William Winter, “of the school of Everett, Sumner, and Wendell Phillips.” During the last years of his life he was in almost constant demand on the lecture platform, and as the orator on great occasions.

REQUIRED READING.—*Essays from the Easy Chair*, Vol. I.; Oration on Wendell Phillips.

## XVIII.

### NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

1804-1864.

"The rarest genius America has given to literature." — *Fields*.

"The greatest imaginative genius since Shakespeare." — *Lowell*.

"The great story-teller, whose sweet, pure, perfect prose more than deserves the praise that Johnson lavished on the prose of Addison."  
— *Stoddard*.

**Life.** — (In deference to the wish of Hawthorne, expressed shortly before his death, his family have permitted no complete and final biography. To gratify the urgent demands of the public, however, Mrs. Hawthorne in 1868, 1870, and 1871 published copious selections from Hawthorne's note-books, and in 1887 Julian Hawthorne published *Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife*, a work in two volumes, made up chiefly of letters. These, together with Hawthorne's introductions to his novels and tales, and his letters to various persons, which have been, from time to time, published, give a large amount of valuable biographical matter. In addition to these may be mentioned G. P. Lathrop's *A Study of Hawthorne*, Henry James' *Hawthorne* in the English Men of Letters Series, and J. T. Fields' "Hawthorne" in *Yesterdays with Authors*. For the literary history of Salem see G. B. Loring's *History of Essex County, Massachusetts*, with biographical sketches of Roger Williams, Na-

thaniel Hawthorne, Benjamin Pierce, Jones Very, W. H. Prescott, Rufus Choate, and many others whose lives were connected with the city.)

Few towns in America have in their history and surroundings more of the elements of romance than has old Salem, Massachusetts. Its history dates back to the very beginnings of New England; some of the strongest characters of the Puritan days were connected with it, while within its bounds was enacted the darkest tragedy of Colonial times. A bustling seaport in the early days, its prestige ebbed away until, when Hawthorne entered its Custom House, "its wharf was burdened with decayed wooden warehouses, and exhibited few or no symptoms of commercial life."

In this old town, where so much whispers of the past, of wild tales of witchcraft, and of legends of the sea, Nathaniel Hawthorne was born, July 4, 1804. The weird romancer may be said to have been almost indigenous to its soil. In his introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* he wrote:

"It is now nearly two centuries and a quarter since the original Briton, the earliest emigrant of my name, made his appearance in the wild and forest-bordered settlement, which has since become a city. . . . He was a soldier, legislator, judge; he was a ruler in the church; he had all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil. He was likewise a bitter persecutor, as witness the Quakers, who have remembered him in their histories, and relate an incident of his hard severity toward a woman of their sect, which will last longer, it is to be feared, than any record of his better deeds, although these be many. His son too inherited the persecuting spirit, and made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches, that their blood may fairly be said to have left a stain upon him. . . . Planted deep, in the town's earliest infancy and

childhood, by these two earnest and energetic men, the race has ever since subsisted here ; always, too, in respectability ; never, so far as I have known, disgraced by a single unworthy member. . . . From father to son, for above a hundred years, they followed the sea ; a gray-headed ship master, in each generation, retiring from the quarter deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale which had blustered against his sire and grand-sire. The boy, also, in due time, passed from the fore-castle to the cabin, spent a tempestuous manhood, and returned from his world wanderings, to grow old and die, and mingle his dust with the native earth."

Hawthorne's father, who followed the ancestral profession, died in Surinam, South America, of yellow fever, in 1808. His death had a great influence on the son's career, for the mother immediately retired into the deepest seclusion. Shut out in a measure from the world, the sensitive boy became shy and diffident, a dreamer and a lover of solitude.

"When I was nine or ten years old my mother took up her residence on the banks of Sebago Lake in Maine, where the family owned a large tract of land, and here I ran quite wild, and would I doubt not have willingly run wild till this time, fishing all day long, or shooting with an old fowling piece ; but reading a good deal, too, on the rainy days, especially in Shakespeare and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and any poetry or light books within my reach. . . . But by and by my good mother began to think it was necessary for her boy to do something else ; so I was sent back to Salem where a prime instructor fitted me for college." — *Autobiographical Letter to R. H. Stoddard.*

By the aid of this instructor, who was Joseph Worcester, the author of the dictionary, Hawthorne was enabled in 1821 to enter Bowdoin College. Strangely enough, the poet Longfellow was a member of the same

class, while Franklin Pierce, afterwards to become President of the United States, had entered the college one year before. Hawthorne's college life was uneventful. In general scholarship he did not rank high, probably because he was too shy to assert himself, yet he early acquired distinction as a master of English composition.

"It was my fortune, or misfortune, just as you please, to have some slender means of supporting myself, and so, on leaving college in 1825, instead of immediately studying a profession, I sat down to consider what pursuit in life I was best fit for. My mother had now returned [to Salem] and taken up her abode in her deceased father's house, a tall, ugly, old, grayish building . . . in which I had a room; and year after year I kept on considering what I was fit for, and time and my destiny decided that I was to be the writer that I am. I had always a natural tendency . . . towards seclusion, and this I now indulged to the uttermost, so that for months together I scarcely held human intercourse outside of my own family, seldom going out except at twilight, or only to take the nearest way to the most convenient solitude, which was oftenest the sea-shore. . . . I had very few acquaintances in Salem, and during the nine or ten years that I spent there in this solitary way, I doubt whether so much as twenty people in the town were aware of my existence." — *Autobiographical Letter*.

It was during these lonely years that Hawthorne served his apprenticeship as a romancer. He wrote almost continuously, burning the greater part of his writing. Some of his tales and sketches, however, appeared from time to time in obscure newspapers and periodicals like *The Salem Gazette*, *The New England Magazine*, *The Boston Token*, and *The Democratic Review*. It was this twelve years of solitude and hard work that made of Hawthorne the master that he afterwards became. (See *American Note-Books*, p. 222.)

1. **Sketches and Tales.** — Although Hawthorne had published, in 1828, *Fanshawe*, a crude romance which in after years he tried hard to suppress, his real literary life did not open until 1837, when he published the first series of the *Twice-Told Tales*, a collection of his fugitive contributions to newspapers and magazines. Two years later, through the influence of Bancroft, he found employment for a time in the Boston Custom House, and in 1841 he joined the Brook Farm Community. He was not enthusiastic over his experience, as his note-books show. "I went to live in Arcady," he says in one place, "and found myself up to the chin in a barnyard."

In 1842 Hawthorne was married to Miss Sophia Peabody of Salem. The union was an ideal one, exerting a powerful influence on his after life and character. Full of happiness and dreams, they moved into the "Old Manse" at Concord. The literary result of the next three years was the *Mosses from an Old Manse*, a collection of sketches and tales after the same plan as the *Twice-Told Tales*. *The Snow Image*, which was prepared at Lenox five years later, completes the list of the tales and sketches. In its preface he wrote, "The public need not dread my again trespassing on its kindness with any more of these musty and mouse-nibbled leaves of old periodicals transformed, by the magic arts of my friendly publishers, into a new book. These are the last." When he bade adieu to the "Old Manse" in 1846, to become surveyor in the Custom House in Salem, he closed the first period of his literary life.



Hawthorne's tales and sketches may be divided into three groups: Allegories, Sketches, and Tales of New England History and Tradition. In the words of Poe, "The strain of allegory completely overwhelms the greater number of his subjects, and in some measure interferes with the direct conduct of all." In such sketches as "David Swain," "The Hollow of Three Hills," "Dr. Heidigger's Experiment," and "Edward Fane's Rosebud," the characters are cold and lifeless, mere symbols used in the solution of some vague, fantastic problem of destiny. About these allegories there is little that is connected with the real, living world. Some are vague and even incomprehensible; some are morbid and unwholesome; "all are the work of a recluse who makes guesses at life from a knowledge of his own heart, acquired by a habit of introspection, but who has had little contact with men." Hawthorne, in the preface to *Twice-Told Tales*, has characterized with rare insight these early sketches:

"They have the pale tint of flowers that blossomed in too retired a shade,—the coolness of a meditative habit which diffuses itself through the feeling and observation of every sketch. Instead of passion there is sentiment; and even in what purports to be pictures of actual life, we have allegory, not always so warmly dressed in its habiliments of flesh and blood as to be taken into the reader's mind without a shiver. . . . The book, if you would see anything in it, requires to be read in the clear, brown, twilight atmosphere in which it was written."

At least one-third of Hawthorne's early work may be classed under the head of Sketches,— "pure essays," as Poe expressed it,—studies of external nature and

human nature from the standpoint of a solitary man. The observer is hidden from view, in a steeple, behind a window, under an umbrella, in the solitude of the fields or the ocean shore, — always secure from observation, and from this vantage ground he describes his surroundings. "Sunday at Home," "Little Annie's Ramble," "The Town Pump," "Toll Gatherer's Day," "Snowflakes," "Footprints on the Sea-shore," "The Old Manse," "Main Street," and numbers of others, have few equals even in Irving's collection. In sweetness and purity of style, faithfulness to nature, delicate humor and pathos, and simple descriptive power, they have no superior in American or even in English literature. After reading his sketches and note-books, one needs not to be told that Hawthorne lived very close to Nature's heart. Many of the sketches are studies of human nature. In "Ethan Brand," "Wakefield," and many others, we have minute analyses of the impulses and motives of the heart.

Of real tales, written with narrative intent only, like the tales of Poe, Hawthorne wrote comparatively few. Among them may be mentioned "The Gray Champion," "The Legends of the Province House," "The Gentle Boy," and "Endicott and the Red Cross."

All of Hawthorne's tales that are connected with the earth at all, have New England for their background. Many of the allegories, like "The Great Carbuncle," "The Great Stone Face," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Ambitious Guest," and "The May Pole of Merry Mount," are drawn from New England history or tra-

dition. Hawthorne transfigured New England. He and Whittier did for it what Burns and Scott did for Scotland. See Professor Richardson's analysis of "Ethan Brand," *American Literature*, Vol. II., 349; Poe's review of Hawthorne's tales, Vol. VI.; and Longfellow's review of *Twice-Told Tales*.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY.—1. Arrange in three classes all of Hawthorne's tales and sketches.

2. Compare the story of "Endicott and the Red Cross," in *Twice-Told Tales*, with the same story in *Grandfather's Chair*.

3. Find in "Endicott and the Red Cross" the germ of *The Scarlet Letter*.

4. Find in the tales materials which are found in their original form in the note-books, as, for example, the story of the one-armed soap boiler in "Ethan Brand."

REQUIRED READING.—"The Hollow of Three Hills," "Ethan Brand," "Sights from a Steeple," "The Town Pump," "Night Sketches," "Wakefield," "Endicott and the Red Cross," "The Gentle Boy."

2. **Four Great Romances.**—During the three years in the Custom House at Salem Hawthorne wrote very little, the routine of official business proving too distracting for literary effort. But when, in 1849, through the coming into power of the Whigs, he was removed from his office, he immediately devoted all of his time and energies to a romance which had been shaping itself in his thoughts for several years. *The Scarlet Letter*, which appeared in 1850, at once made Hawthorne's literary fame secure. Its success was phenomenal, the first edition being exhausted in ten days. During the next year and a half Hawthorne resided at Lenox, Massachusetts, where he produced *The Snow Image and*

other *Twice-Told Tales*, and *The House of the Seven Gables*. He passed the winter of 1851-52 at West Newton, where he finished *The Blithedale Romance*. These years, between 1849 and 1852, were the period of Hawthorne's greatest literary activity, since during this time he produced three out of the four great romances upon which his fame chiefly rests. *The Marble Faun*, which appeared in 1860, completes the number.

REQUIRED READING.—“The Custom House,” introductory to *The Scarlet Letter*.

Of the four romances *The Scarlet Letter* stands at the head in intensity, subtle analysis of human passion, and

*The Scarlet Letter*.

*The House of the Seven Gables*.

*The Blithedale Romance*.

*The Marble Faun*.

minute dissection of the workings of guilty human hearts. Its background and atmosphere were taken with wonderful accuracy from early New England days; its theme is the blasting power of a single sin. *The Scarlet Letter* is, without doubt, the most

artistic creation that America has given to literature.

*The House of the Seven Gables*, while not so intense as *The Scarlet Letter*, is, nevertheless, a sombre story of sin and its punishment. Its background is old Salem; its theme, in Hawthorne's own words, is how “the wrongdoing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrollable mischief.” The romance has almost the three unities of the Greek drama. The time, although centuries are involved, is in reality but a few weeks; the story only once leaves the venerable house of the seven gables and then it hastens

back again "like an owl bewildered in the daylight and hastening back to its hollow tree"; its action is the embodiment of unity.

As little Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter* is Hawthorne's most imaginative creation, and as Phœbe in *The House of the Seven Gables* is his sweetest and most natural conception, so Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance* is his most intense, vivid, and powerful character. The background and atmosphere of *The Blithedale Romance* were drawn with accuracy from the author's recollections and notes of his Brook Farm experience, which he declared to be the most romantic episode of his life. The characters were, without doubt, imaginary; for while freely admitting the resemblance, Hawthorne emphatically denied having made in Zenobia a study of Margaret Fuller. The theme of the romance, in its author's own words, is "that the whole universe, . . . and Providence or Destiny to boot, make common cause against the woman who swerves one hair's-breadth out of the beaten track." *The Marble Faun*, Hawthorne's longest romance, is the only one of his creations that has a foreign background and atmosphere. Its theme is the transforming power of a single sin. The romance is more mystical and vague than the others; the characters, in the words of Motley, are "shadowy, weird, fantastic, Hawthornesque shapes, flitting through the golden gloom which is the atmosphere of the book"; the narrative is often delayed by long descriptions of Italian scenery and life, and yet the romance is in many respects the maturest and richest of Hawthorne's creations.



These four great romances mark the highest flight of imaginative genius in America. In their construction Hawthorne followed no models. Judged by the standards usually applied to the romance, they are singularly defective. They are almost wholly without plot; they contain little incident; and they deal with few characters. Their interest depends almost wholly upon their minute analysis of the workings and motives of the human heart. Each romance is woven of four, or at the most five, characters, a vague, romantic background, and a great moral or psychological truth. All of them are more or less allegorical. "Every gable of the seven gables, every room in the house, every burdock growing rankly before the door, has a symbolical significance." Bulwer-Lytton declared that "In 'Transformation' (*The Marble Faun*) by Mr. Hawthorne, the mere story of outward incident can never be properly understood unless the reader's mind goes along with the exquisite mysticism which is symbolized by the characters. In that work, often very faulty in the execution, exceedingly grand in the conception, are typified the classical, sensuous life, through Donato; the Jewish dispensation, through Miriam; the Christian dispensation, through Hilda, who looks over the ruins of Rome from her virgin chamber amidst the doves."

Hawthorne wove a romance as a mathematician solves a problem. Given, as he expressed it, "the self-concentrated philanthropist; the high-spirited woman bruising herself against the narrow limitations of her sex; the weakly maiden, whose tremulous nerves endow her with



sibylline attributes; the minor poet, beginning life with strenuous aspirations which die out with his youthful fervor"; place them together in a phalanstery remote from the rest of the world and what will be the result? How will the mutual attractions and repulsions, the diversity of temperaments and ideals end? Who shall say that the denouement of *The Blithedale Romance* is not the only possible one? For the romancer knows every secret, watches every pulsation of the souls of his characters, and works them into the equation. The reader must accept the result as the author did, even though it clash with his sympathies, as we know it often did with the author's.

REQUIRED READING. — *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Marble Faun*.

3. **Stories for Children.** — In 1836, Hawthorne had left for four months his solitude in Salem to edit for S. C. Goodrich a juvenile periodical in Boston. This experience, short as it was, was a valuable one; for it revealed to Hawthorne his powers as a writer for children. His note-books from this period begin to contain the germs of juvenile sketches and stories. Shortly after publishing *Twice-Told Tales*, he made his first real venture in this difficult field with *The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair*, a most delightful creation, which tells the early history of New England in a series of well-chosen episodes. *A Wonder Book, for Girls and Boys*, written at Lenox directly after the publication of *The House of the Seven Gables*, was Hawthorne's next venture. Its success was so imme-

diate and remarkable that, in 1853, while residing in Concord at "The Wayside," a home that he had purchased the previous year, he wrote *Tanglewood Tales, a Second Wonder Book*. Ten days after its completion his appointment by President Pierce to the consulate at Liverpool was confirmed by the United States Senate.

REQUIRED READING.—"The Wayside," introductory to *Tanglewood Tales*; "Consular Experiences" in *Our Old Home*.

Hawthorne's great interest in child life is shown throughout all his writings. He was in thorough sympathy with childhood, and understood thoroughly its limitations and capabilities. The task which he imposed upon himself was no easy one. To write a book that will interest children, that will not be "written downward," or, on the other hand, "be artificial or complex," is an accomplishment that few have acquired. It was Hawthorne's belief that "children possess an unestimated sensibility to whatever is deep or high in imagination or feeling, so long as it is simple likewise." His selection of the old Grecian myths, as material for child lore, was a bold and characteristic one. "These old legends," he asked, "some of them so hideous, others so melancholy and miserable, amid which the Greek tragedians sought their themes and moulded them into the sternest forms of grief that ever the world saw, was such material the stuff that children's playthings should be made of?" It was, indeed, a natural question. But beneath the magic of Haw-

*Grandfather's  
Chair.*

*A Wonder  
Book.*

*Tanglewood  
Tales.*

*True Stories  
from History  
and Biography.*

thorne's touch everything objectional disappeared. "They fall away," as he himself explained it, "and are thought of no more the instant he puts his imagination in sympathy with the innocent little circle whose wide-open eyes are fixed so eagerly upon him. The stories transform themselves and reassume the shapes which they might be supposed to possess in the pure childhood of the world." Hawthorne recreated the Grecian mythology. His wonder books are a real addition to the world's literature of childhood, ranking with such classics as Grimm's and with Andersen's *Fairy Tales*, and with Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. E. P. Whipple declared that "Hawthorne never pleases grown people so much as when he writes with an eye to the enjoyment of little people." There are few that will not agree heartily with Hawthorne's declaration that he "never did anything so good as those old baby-stories."

REQUIRED READING.—*The Wonder Book*.

4. **Fragmentary and Unfinished Work.**—Hawthorne was in Europe seven years,—four years as consul at Liverpool, and three years in France, Italy, and various parts of England. In 1860, he published in London, under the title *Transformation*, *The Marble Faun*, which he had written in Italy and revised at Redcar, England. The same year, with eager anticipation, he returned to America to spend his declining years at the Wayside in Concord. But he was destined to produce only one more complete book, *Our Old Home*, a volume

compiled in 1862 from his English note-books. His health was sadly shattered from some mysterious disease that baffled the skill of physicians. He attempted at least three romances, all of which he left unfinished. Hoping to stay his fast-ebbing energies, in the spring of 1864 he started with his lifelong friend, ex-President Pierce, on a carriage drive through the White Mountains. A few days later, on May 19, the sad word came from Plymouth, New Hampshire, where they had been stopping for the night, that Hawthorne had suddenly passed away.

At the funeral the half-finished manuscript of his last romance was laid upon his coffin, rendering deeply significant the noble lines read by Longfellow:

“ Ah! who shall lift again that wand of magic power  
 And the lost clew regain?  
 The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower  
 Unfinished must remain.”

Since Hawthorne's death his unfinished romances and many extracts from his note-books, which he had kept with extreme care from day to day throughout the greater part of his life, have been given to the world. These volumes, although of a fragmentary nature, — a storehouse of descriptions, plots for romances, characterizations of peculiar personalities, written to be drawn from for his more ambitious literary efforts,—are of untold value to the student of Hawthorne's life and philosophy. The fragments of romances produced in his last years,

*Our Old Home.*  
 American,  
 English,  
 French, and  
 Italian Note-  
 Books.  
*The Dolliver*  
*Romance.*  
*Septimius*  
*Felton.*  
*Dr. Grimshaw's*  
*Secret.*

while full of melancholy evidence of failing powers, contain here and there some of his strongest work. In these fragments we find work in every stage of development. These and the note-books admit us into the romancer's literary workshop.

The note-books, in connection with the autobiographical chapters of the romances and tales published during Hawthorne's lifetime, give us as complete a picture of the romancer as we shall ever have. No one can ever reveal him to the world any more vividly than he has chosen to reveal himself. Well might he enjoin upon his family to publish no biography, for he had been his own Boswell.

**Hawthorne's Style.** — (Richardson, II.; Whipple's *Literature and Life, American Literature*; Welsh's *English Literature and Language*, II.; Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library*; Taylor's *Essays and Notes*; Higginson's *Short Studies of American Authors*; Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*; Hutton's *Essays in Literary Criticism*; Lathrop's *Study of Hawthorne*; Julian Hawthorne's "Hawthorne's Philosophy," *Century Magazine*, May, 1886.) As a writer of strong, idiomatic, musical English, Hawthorne must be ranked with the great masters of the brightest age of English literature. He stands as a perpetual rebuke to those who insist that perfect English is a lost art. His style has not a hint of artificiality, not a suggestion of painstaking revision, or of slavery to the lifeless rules of rhetoric. It seems as natural and spontaneous as a talk by the fireside with a friend, and yet the reader looks in vain for a single

careless or slovenly sentence, one that is not of crystal clearness and limpid sweetness. A delicate humor, which, like all true humor, is very close to pathos, plays over every page. There is not a prose writer of the century upon whose work one would be more willing to stake the reputation of our stout old English tongue.

“Wherein this excellence in Hawthorne’s style consists it is not easy to say; the charm is too airy and impalpable for the grasp of language. It is to be described by negatives rather than positives; his style is not stiff, not pedantic; it is free from mannerism, caricature, and rhetoric; it has a sap and flavor of its own; it is a peculiar combination of ease and finish. The magic of style is like the magic of manner, it is felt by all, but it can be analyzed and defined by few. . . . Hawthorne never was, could not be, a careless writer. By an inevitable law of his mind, every conception to which his pen gave shape was graceful and exact. . . . Before his exquisite sentences verbal criticism folds its hands for lack of argument.” — *G. S. Hillard*.



## XIX.

### THE CAMBRIDGE POETS (1).

**Old Cambridge.** — No history of American literature can be complete that fails to mention the great service done by Harvard College in introducing to the American people the culture and the art of Europe. For more than half a century Cambridge was our literary port of entry, our distributing centre, our literary capital.

In 1818 Washington Allston, our first evangelist of culture, came back from his long sojourn in the art galleries of Europe, a member of the Royal Academy, to spend his last years in Boston and Cambridgeport. His studio became the art centre of America, an enchanted spot amid the wilds of the New World, where, in the words of Lowell, "one might go to breathe Venetian air and, better yet, the very spirit wherein the elder brothers of art labored." In 1819 Edward Everett, "the best Grecian" of his generation, returned from Germany and Greece to take the chair of Greek at Harvard, and to inspire with his own boundless enthusiasm all who came in contact with him. Four years later Channing told to eager audiences of the treasures of literature and art in the European capitals. Through the efforts of the Harvard scholars, the Greek language

and literature soon began to emerge from the obscurity into which they had been thrown by Mather and Barlow. In 1830 Felton edited Homer, and shortly afterwards Isocrates and Æschylus. Under the influence of Buckminster, Felton, Ripley, Emerson, and others, the German literature and philosophy began to be better known. In 1838 Ripley published the first two volumes of his *Foreign Standard Literature*, a series soon to be expanded into fourteen volumes; two years later Felton translated Mentzel's *German Literature*, and in 1848 Dr. Hedge, German professor at Harvard, published his valuable *Prose Writers of Germany*. The effect upon American thought and literature of the influx of German philosophy has been already noted.

But the American people as a whole knew little of Continental literature until Longfellow "opened the sluices through which the flood of German sentimental poetry poured into the United States." Longfellow's early translations from the Spanish, the French, and the German, and his *Hyperion*, which is full of the intoxicating Rhine wine, mark an epoch in the history of American poetry. He did for Germany and the Continent of Europe what Irving had done for England. Full freighted as he was with all that was purest and best in the Old World culture, and uniting with this a rare sympathy and a sweetly gentle spirit, he commanded from the very first an audience of his countrymen such as no American had ever won before or will ever win again. With the appearance of Longfellow and the remarkable group that soon gathered about

him, the influence of Cambridge on our literature reached its highest point. Until the day of Longfellow's death Cambridge was the literary centre of America, and the house of the gentle poet the focal point of cis-Atlantic poetry.

SUGGESTED READING.—Lowell's "Cambridge Thirty Years Ago," and Holmes' "Old Cambridge."

### HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882).

"The poet of hope, home, and history." — *Butterworth*.

"I think that the poet himself, reading his own sweet songs, felt the apostolic nature of his mission, — that it was religious, in the etymological sense of the word, the binding back of America to the Old World taste and imagination. Our true rise in poetry may be dated from Longfellow's method of exciting an interest in it." — *Stedman*.

**Life.** — (The standard life of the poet is the Rev. Samuel Longfellow's *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, two volumes, which, with the same author's *Final Memorials*, gives a wonderfully complete and accurate picture of Longfellow and his friends. Consult also G. L. Austin's *Life*, which has considerable value; also W. S. Kennedy's "scrap book," entitled, *H. W. Longfellow: Biography, Anecdote, Letters, Criticism*; F. H. Underwood's appreciative study of Longfellow, and E. S. Robertson's *Life* in the Great Writers Series. For a complete bibliography of the poet's works see Kennedy's *Life*, and also *Monthly Reference Lists* of the Providence Public Library for February, 1882. R. H. Stoddard's *Homes and Haunts of our* [six] *Elder Poets*, and *Tributes to Longfellow and Emerson* by the

Massachusetts Historical Society, are very helpful and interesting. Garnet's *Studies in Longfellow* is well-nigh indispensable as a guide to an intelligent classroom study of the poet's work.)

It is a curious fact that the soul and centre of the Cambridge group of scholars and poets was not a native of Cambridge nor even an alumnus of Harvard College. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, at a time when that now flourishing city was but a forest-bound hamlet. Like Dana and Bryant and Holmes, he inherited some of the best blood of New England, being able, on his mother's side, to trace his lineage back to John Alden and Priscilla of early Puritan fame. The Longfellows also were of a sturdy yeoman stock. The poet's great-grandfather was a village blacksmith in Portland, who by hard toil and strict economy had managed to send one of his ten children to Harvard College; while the poet's father, a son of this earliest scholar of the family, himself a Harvard graduate, was a leading lawyer in Portland and at one time a member of Congress. Henry Wadsworth, the culminating flower of the Longfellow family, was born Feb. 27, 1807. His early life was a most happy one. He was surrounded by books and an atmosphere of culture and refinement; he was given every educational advantage that his native town could afford, and in his fourteenth year he was sent, fully prepared, to Bowdoin College, where he became a member of the famous class of 1825.

REQUIRED READING. — "My Lost Youth," and "Parker Cleaveland."

For a time after his graduation Longfellow was unsettled as to his future. Even during his college days he had turned his eyes anxiously toward the unknown into which he was soon to go. Golden visions of a literary life even then were beginning to flit before him, but his practical father had given little encouragement. In 1824 he had written to his son: "A literary life, to one who has the means of support, must be very pleasant, but there is not enough wealth in this country to afford encouragement and patronage to merely literary men."

The literary outlook in those days was indeed a discouraging one. While in college Longfellow had read with intense enjoyment *The Sketch Book*, then in its first edition, and he had written in his diary shortly afterwards that another novel, *The Pilot*, by the author of *The Spy*, was out. But these books, together with Bryant's early poems, represented almost the sum total of American literature worthy of the name. The future seemed dark and forbidding even as seen through the eyes of a youthful poet, and so, with a sigh of regret, Longfellow gave up his dream and resigned himself to the study of his father's and grandfather's profession. But during the autumn following his graduation from college, there came an event that changed the whole current of his life. His *alma mater*, with rare judgment and a far-sightedness that seems most remarkable, offered to him before he had completed his nineteenth year her newly founded chair of modern languages, and Longfellow, eagerly accepting the offer, spent the next three

years in preliminary study in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany.

“*Outre Mer*,” the title of Longfellow’s first original work, may be taken as the motto which dominated his early literary life. The poet’s first impulse and inspiration came from “beyond the sea.” *Outre Mer* is a picture of romantic Europe, — Europe as seen by the fresh, joyous eyes of a thoroughly healthy, happy, poetic youth, whose life had been confined to a dull provincial village and to the unromantic halls of a frontier college. The book fairly effervesces with its author’s boundless sense of freedom, his irrepressible spirits, and his boyish enjoyment. Longfellow approached the Continent as Irving had approached old England, — almost with reverence. *Outre Mer* was another *Sketch Book*, — every reviewer of the early editions made mention of this fact. Longfellow did not deny the source of his inspiration. “I also am writing a book,” he wrote from Göttingen in 1829, “a kind of *Sketch Book* of scenes in France, Spain, and Italy.” The same charm, the same crystal clearness of expression, the same joyous style, the same “melancholy tenderness and atmosphere of reverie,” is in each, and yet *Outre Mer* is as distinctively Longfellow’s as *The Sketch Book* is Irving’s.

In 1839 Longfellow published his second prose work, *Hyperion*. The four years since the publication of *Outre Mer* had been eventful ones. He had been called after five years at Bowdoin, to Harvard, to the important chair of modern languages just vacated by the scholarly George Ticknor, the historian of Spanish literature;



he had journeyed a second time to Europe, and in Rotterdam he had met with the first great sorrow of his life in the death of his young wife; and after two years of intense study, he had returned to commence his work at Harvard. *Hyperion* is another *Sketch Book*, but it is richer, more vigorous, more matured than *Outre Mer*. The atmosphere is Switzerland and Germany,—the Germany of Uhland and of Heine. Wild legends of the Rhine, translations of German lyrics, fragments of criticism, and bits of scenery and travel are strung upon a slender thread of story, and all is tinted with the vague, mellow hues of the German “Mahrchenwelt.” The book has an autobiographic value. It is no secret that the hero, Paul Fleming, was Longfellow himself, and that the heroine was Miss Frances Appleton, who afterwards became his wife. “He met her,” says his biographer, “in Switzerland, had travelled with her a fortnight there, and had renewed the acquaintance when the family returned to Boston in 1837. The portrait, the feelings recorded in the story, are undoubtedly true. The incidents are imaginary. Into this romance the author put the glow, the fervor, the fever, of his heart.”

*Hyperion*, while not a great book, was nevertheless an epoch-making one. Like Irving’s *Sketch Book* and *Alhambra*, it opened up to Americans a new world. It is a book for youth, to whom it brings revelations and visions, and America at the time of its first publication was in its youth. It opened the splendid vista of Continental beauty and romance and it brought a new longing into a thousand American homes. *Voices of the Night*

(1839), Longfellow's first volume of poems, was in the same key. The translations were mostly from the German and the nine original poems are full of the "sadness and longing" of the Old World singers. The romantic melancholy, the gorgeous imagery, the sweet, lilting measures, the noble appeals to courage and hope, all struck home to the popular heart, and into thousands of other American homes came the first ray of beauty, the first longing for brighter things.

REQUIRED READING. — *Hyperion*; *Voices of the Night*.

**Ballads and Heart Poems.**—During the period between the publication of *Voices of the Night* and *Evangeline*, Longfellow wrote his most popular ballads and lyrics. His second book of poems, *Ballads and Other Poems* (1841), which immediately indicated his true place in the poetic world, contained such well-known favorites as "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Rainy Day," "Maidenhood," and "Excelsior"; while *The Belfry of Bruges* (1845) added to these "The Day is Done," "The Old Clock on the Stairs," and "The Arrow and the Song."

As a ballad writer Longfellow has had few superiors among American poets. The requisites of the ballad are most exacting. It must tell a simple tale from one point of view, rush at once to the story and end as suddenly. It must be short, concise, rapid, and every word must count. "The Wreck of the Hesperus" and "The Skeleton in Armor" stand at the head of Longfellow's

ballads. The latter is full of the true Viking dash and fire. He must indeed be devoid of poetic feeling who is not thrilled by the grand crescendo

“As with his wings aslant,  
Sails the fierce cormorant,  
Seeking some rocky haunt,  
With his prey laden,  
So toward the open main,  
Beating to sea again,  
Through the wild hurricane,  
Bore I the maiden.”

But it is as the poet of the heart and the home that Longfellow is most widely known. He has touched all the chords of those experiences which are common to mankind,—the aspirations and the nameless melancholy of youth; the dream of love; the endearments of home; the fierce battle of manhood; the visit of death; the vacant chair; the sunny memories of age. In thousands of American homes Longfellow is the only poet. He has comforted thousands of sorrowing hearts and pointed thousands to the star of hope. He has made the title “poet” a holy one, and forever silenced those materialistic souls who contend that verse writers have no mission among men.

REQUIRED READING. — The nine poems mentioned above.

The twelve years following the publication of *The Belfry of Bruges* (1845) was the period of Longfellow's greatest literary activity. In the following year he published *Evangeline*, by many considered his master work; in 1849 appeared his third prose work, *Kavanagh*, a

novel of New England village life. *The Seaside and Fireside* (1850) contained the well-known poem, "The Building of the Ship." One year later he completed *The Golden Legend*, a mediæval romance of the Rhine, which he afterwards incorporated into his long work, *Christus*. In 1854 he resigned his professor's chair at Harvard to devote his whole time to literary work. One year later he published *Hiawatha* and in 1858 he completed his second long poem in hexameter verse, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

**Evangeline.** — (For the history of Acadie see Bancroft, 1883 edition, II., 425, and Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe*. See also Warner's *Baddeck*. For a treatment of the English hexameter see Arnold's *On Translating Homer*, and Stedman, VI., 4.) This beautiful poem, which is called by Stedman "the flower of American idyls" and by Howells "the best poem of our age," is founded upon one of the most pathetic incidents in American history,—the expulsion by the English of the French settlers in Nova Scotia in 1775. Longfellow used for the poem a metre which had been but seldom used in English literature,—the old hexameter of Homer and Virgil. As a result, few poems in American literature have been more criticised. Poe, who delighted to pose as a metrical expert, assailed it without mercy. (For Lowell's opinion see the *Fable for Critics*.) It seems to be the opinion generally of critics, that the real classic hexameter cannot be reproduced in English. The language is too harsh and unbending, and the quantity of English syllables depends

upon accent and is not unchangeable, as is the case with the Greek. There is much to criticise in Longfellow's hexameters. He ignored the spondees which add such a peculiar charm to the Greek and Latin epics; he sometimes wrenched words violently to bring them to his use; he has many faulty lines that are not even good prose. There is a fatal facility about the metre that is very liable to make the poem written in it monotonous, "sounding," as one critic has said, "like hoof-beats on a muddy road." But notwithstanding these criticisms, all must admit that to change the metre of *Evangeline* would be to rob it of much of its beauty. It has a sweet lilting movement very pleasing to the popular ear and it is peculiarly fitted to the sentimental, melancholy atmosphere of the poem. There are lines in it that lose nothing when compared with the best of the classical hexameters. The twenty-three lines describing the burning of Grand Pré, commencing "Suddenly arose from the south," while not perfect metrically, are nevertheless Homeric in their grandeur.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY. — For the story of the Arcadians charmingly told read *Grandfather's Chair*, II., 8. Read metrically a few pages of the poem pointing out particularly faulty lines, as *e.g.*, ll. 82, 150, etc. Point out strikingly sonorous lines, as *e.g.*, ll. 793-797. Notice the two parts of each line. See if the cæsural pause comes always in the same place. What predominates in the poem, character sketching, nature study, or dramatic incident? Could the poem be called a panorama of beautiful pictures? How many different classes of men are described? Make a list. Is *Evangeline* sharply characterized as are some of the great heroines of tragedy? Can we paint a clear mental picture of her from the data given from Longfellow? Find all the lines

in the poem that describe her in any way. Notice the variety of scenery described, — Canadian forests, southern bayous by moonlight, prairies, and great American rivers. Trace upon a map the journeys of Evangeline as far as revealed by the poem. What variety of natural scenery does Longfellow seem to prefer? Compare ll. 148–170 with the Indian Summer poems of Bryant and Whittier. Compare ll. 114–133 with Longfellow's "Village Blacksmith." Compare ll. 171–267 with *Snow Bound* and "The Cotter's Saturday Night." Notice Longfellow's constant use of analogy, as in l. 454. Find other examples. How might ll. 1125–1165 suggest that the idea of *Hiawatha* was already in Longfellow's mind?

**Hiawatha.**— "This Indian Edda — if I may so call it — is founded on a tradition prevalent among the North American Indians, of a personage of miraculous birth, who was sent among them to clear their rivers, forests, and fishing grounds, and to teach them the arts of peace. He was known among different tribes by several names. . . . Mr. Schoolcraft gives an account of him in his *Algie Researches*, Vol. I., p. 134; and in his *History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, III., p. 314, may be found the Iroquois form of the tradition, derived from the verbal narratives of an Onondaga chief. Into this old tradition, I have woven other curious Indian legends drawn chiefly from the various and valuable writings of Mr. Schoolcraft, to whom the literary world is greatly indebted for his indefatigable zeal in rescuing from oblivion so much of the legendary lore of the Indians. The scene of the poem is among the Ojibways on the southern shore of Lake Superior, in the region between the Pictured Rocks and the Grand Sable." — *From the Author's Preface.*

*Hiawatha* is, without doubt, the most original contribution that Longfellow made to our literature. Many critics have joined with O. B. Frothingham and Anthony Trollope, the English novelist, in declaring it the "poet's masterpiece." Professor Richardson calls it "our nearest approach to an American Epic." It has certainly caught, as no other poem has, the spirit of the forest; the fantastic mythology of a fast-fading race; the



“Legends and traditions,  
With the odors of the forest,  
With the dew and damp of meadows,  
With the curling smoke of wigwams,  
With the rushing of great rivers.”

In *Hiawatha* Longfellow again introduced to English readers a new metre, — the eight-syllabled trochaic measure of the Finnish epic poem, *The Kalevala*. “This monotonous time beat” seems particularly fitted for the primitive, aboriginal legends of Hiawatha, with their strange, uncouth nomenclature and “their frequent repetitions.” Longfellow is unquestionably the only poet who has succeeded in extracting any real poetry from the Indian.

REQUIRED READING. — *Hiawatha*, Chs. III., VII., X., XV., XX.

**The Poet of American History.** — Although Longfellow has been called “the least national of our poets,” one English critic even declaring that of all our singers Longfellow would have been the last he should have guessed to be an American had he “come across his works in ignorance of the fact,” it is nevertheless true that no other poet, save Whittier perhaps, has done so much to make poetic our American history and tradition. “But few of our associates,” said Dr. Ellis before the Massachusetts Historical Society, “can have studied our local and even national history more sedulously than did Mr. Longfellow. He took the saddest of our New England tragedies and the sweetest of its rural home scenes, the wayside inn, the alarum of war, the Indian legend, and the hanging of the crane in the modest

household, and his genius has invested them with enduring charms and morals."

Of early Puritan life he has given us the brighter side in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, and the darker aspects in the *New England Tragedies*. He has given us in "Elizabeth" a charming picture of Quaker life and love, and in "Paul Revere's Ride" the most spirited ballad that has been inspired by the Revolution. "The Baron of St. Castine," "The Rhyme of Sir Christopher," "Eliot's Oak," "Lady Wentworth," and "The Ballad of the French Fleet" are but a few of the other lyrics that have added a new charm to our early history. As the poet of the American "seaside and fireside," Longfellow has again rendered his native land a priceless service. He is more and more coming to be recognized as the poet of our northern ocean. "The Building of the Ship," with its magnificent ending, is without a parallel, in its line, in English literature; while such poems as "Seaweed," "The Lighthouse," and "The Fire of Driftwood" are redolent with odors of the vast ocean.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY. — Make a list of Longfellow's poems of American history and tradition, arranging them chronologically. What proportion are they of his poetic work? Why should the story of John Alden and Priscilla have had a peculiar charm for Longfellow? Compare "John Endicott" with Whittier's "Cassandra Southwick," "The King's Missive," and his other poems of Quaker persecution. Compare "Giles Corey" with Whittier's "Witch's Daughter" and his other poems of witchcraft. Find all of Longfellow's Indian poems. How do they compare with similar works of Bryant and Whittier? Find Longfellow's anti-slavery poems. Do they deserve the criticism that the poet's

"very anger was gentle"? Compare them with Whittier's. Make a list of the poems of the sea, and of the poems of home and fireside. How many of Longfellow's poems are written in hexameters?

**Longfellow's Last Years** were eventless. His life had been again saddened, in 1861, when his wife was burned to death by the upsetting of a candle upon her dress, but no murmur escaped his lips or embittered his sweet songs. Year after year went by, marked by the appearance of new poems and new volumes. In 1863 he published *The Tales of a Wayside Inn*, a series of ballads and lyrics bound together, like the *Canterbury Tales*, by a thread of story. In 1860 he completed his translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, a work that at once took a place beside the great translations of the century. With the aid of Lowell and other eminent scholars, Longfellow had studied critically every line of the great poem and the resulting translation is as perfect as scholarship and care can make it. The long poem *Christus* was completed in 1872. In 1875, he read, at the fiftieth anniversary of his class at Bowdoin, the noble poem *Morituri Salutamus*, which stands as a fitting crown to a long life devoted almost wholly to song. *The Hanging of the Crane* (1874), *The Masque of Pandora* (1875), *Kéramos* (1878), *Ultima Thule*, (1880), and the posthumous tragedy *Michael Angelo*, completed the poet's life-work.

No American has been more universally beloved than Longfellow. When he died in Cambridge, March 24, 1882, there was mourning throughout the whole land. All felt as if they had lost a near and dear friend. His

last written words, penned but a few days before his death, were in accord with his whole life :

“Out of the shadow of night  
The world moves into light;  
It is daybreak everywhere.”

He is the only American save Lowell who has been given a monument in Westminster Abbey, where England buries her honored dead. Only a few others of foreign birth are commemorated within those sacred walls, the chief of these being the German composer, Handel.

**Longfellow's Place in Literature.** — (Stedman, Ch. VI.; Richardson, II.; Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, I., 59; Whittier's *Literary Recreations*; Scudder's *Men and Letters*; Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*.) Longfellow was not the singer of fierce and violent passion, nor of the profounder depths of tragedy; he was not a Shakespeare nor a Milton; he was not profound like Emerson, nor intensely individual like Poe; he was not strikingly original like Whittier, nor grand and elemental like Bryant. He was a singer in all keys. He understood all the stops in the great organ and struck all of its chords. As a craftsman he has had few equals among those who have used our language. His intimate acquaintance with the literatures of all lands, his thorough culture, “his keen appreciation of the beauty and power of art,” made him an artist in the most delicate sense of the word. His sense of melody was well-nigh faultless. Whitman, who viewed poetry from a unique standpoint, complained that Longfellow had “an idiocracy, almost a sickness of verbal melody.”

The genial, loving, kindly nature of the poet shines from all his work. He was universal in his sympathies; his poetry is "the gospel of good-will set to music." So, while Longfellow can never be ranked among the great poets who have brought burning messages to men, he will ever remain the most popular of poets, the one whose sweet sympathy has dried the tears of thousands. "His song was a household service, the ritual of our feastings and mournings; and often it rehearsed for us the tales of many lands, or, best of all, the legends of our own."

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## XX.

### THE CAMBRIDGE POETS (2).

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894).

‘Dr. Holmes bore much the same relation to Boston that Dr. Johnson did to London.’ — *C. F. Johnson*.

“The most concise, apt, and effective poet of the school of Pope this country has ever produced.” — *Tuckerman*.

“Who else wears so many crowns as he — the irresistible humorist and wit; the liberal, bold, profound, and subtle thinker; the poet, the essayist, the novelist; the man of science; the consummate teacher; the skilful physician; the unselfish patriot; the honest, faithful, tender friend?” — *Professor Young*.

**Life** (by W. S. Kennedy and by E. E. Brown. The final and authorized life of Holmes is now, 1895, being prepared by John T. Morse, Jr.). Few men have made so complete a revelation of their lives and inner selves as has Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was “his own Boswell.” Almost everything that he wrote has an autobiographic value. The student who reads carefully the thirteen volumes of his works has gained as perfect a mental picture of the genial autocrat as can be conveyed by mere words. All biographies of Holmes are well-nigh valueless in the presence of his own autobiographical work.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL READINGS FROM HOLMES.

(REFERENCES ARE TO THE RIVERSIDE EDITION, 1892.)

1. Glimpses of Old Cambridge and the author's childhood: — *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, pp. 10–32; *A Mortal Antipathy*, pp. 22–32.
2. School days, 1819–1825: — *Pages from an Old Volume of Life*, pp. 239–259.
3. The class of 1829, Harvard: — *Over the Teacups*, pp. 28–30; *Poems* of the class of 1829.
4. Student days in the Harvard Medical School, 1830–1833: — *Medical Essays*, pp. 420–440.
5. First visit to Europe, 1833–1835: — *Our One Hundred Days in Europe*, pp. 1–8.
6. Early literary work, 1830–1857: — *A Mortal Antipathy*, pp. 1–12.
7. The Autocrat series: — Introduction to *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*; *Over the Teacups*, pp. 303–305.
8. "My Hunt After the Captain," 1862: — *Pages from an Old Volume of Life*, pp. 16–77.
9. Memoirs of Motley and Emerson: — *A Mortal Antipathy*, pp. 13–20.
10. *Our One Hundred Days in Europe*, 1886.
11. *Over the Teacups*, Introduction.

"I took my first draught of that fatal mixture called atmospheric air on the 29th of August, 1809. My father's record of the fact is before me on a page of the 'Massachusetts Register' in the form of a brief foot-note thus: ' = 29. son b.' The sand which he threw on the fresh ink is glittering on it still." — *Letter to the New York Critic*.

The poet's father, the penner of this four-letter record, was the Rev. Abiel Holmes, for forty years pastor of the first parish in Cambridge and author of

*The Annals of America*, a scholarly work of much value. The poet's mother, a daughter of the distinguished lawyer, Oliver Wendell, could trace her descent from the Quincys and the Bradstreets, — the best blood of New England. Holmes not only inherited an intellect refined by generations of culture, but he spent his early years in the shadow of the great university and in a mellow atmosphere of culture and refinement. No man could have better reason to say as he did in after years: "I go for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. Above all things, as a child he should have tumbled about in a library. All men are afraid of books that have not handled them from infancy."

Holmes entered Harvard in 1825, the year in which Hawthorne and Longfellow received their degrees at Bowdoin, and a year before Poe entered the University of Virginia. His college career was a brilliant one. He ranked high in his studies, and he was class poet at the close of his course, an honor gained by his sparkling contributions to the *Collegian*, some of the best-known of which were "The Spectre Pig," "The Height of the Ridiculous," and "Evening: by a Tailor."

Holmes' class, in many respects the most remarkable one ever graduated from Harvard, had among its members such famous men as James Freeman Clarke, Benjamin Pierce, the mathematician, Samuel F. Smith, author of "America," W. H. Channing, Benjamin R. Curtis, Samuel May, and others nearly as well known. Holmes has celebrated this class in a remarkable series

of lyrics, — perhaps the best occasional poems in our literature.

The reverend father of the poet had designated his son for the pulpit. Holmes saw more of an opening in the legal profession, but after a year spent in reading Blackstone and Coke, he decided to take up the study of medicine, and accordingly spent two years and a half in the Harvard Medical School, afterwards going abroad for three years to finish his studies in Paris and Edinburgh. On his return to America he was, in 1838, appointed professor of anatomy and physiology at Dartmouth College, and, in 1847, was called to the same chair at Harvard, which chair he held for thirty-five years, resigning, in 1882, that he might devote his whole time to literary work.

**Holmes' Literary Life** may be divided into two distinct periods: the first ending in 1857, characterized by his early work as a poet; the second marked by his work in the various departments of prose.

Had Holmes died in 1857, eight years after Poe — who was born the same year — had closed his life-work, he would have been remembered in literature only as the author of two exquisite lyrics and a few genuinely humorous poems like "The Ballad of the Oysterman," "The Dorchester Giant," "The Comet," "The Treadmill Song," and "The Height of the Ridiculous." Holmes has characterized this period of his literary life as that of his "First Portfolio."

It "had boyhood written on every page. A single passionate outcry when the old war-ship I had read about in the broadsides

that were a part of our kitchen literature, and in the *Naval Monument*, was threatened with demolition; a few verses, suggested at the sight of old Major Melville in his cocked hat and breeches, were the best scraps that came out of that first Portfolio, which was soon closed that it should not interfere with the duties of a profession authorized to claim all the time and thought which would have been otherwise expended in filling it. During a quarter of a century the first Portfolio remained closed for the greater part of the time. Only now and then it would be taken up and opened, and something drawn from it for a special occasion, more particularly for the annual reunions of a certain class of which I was a member." — *Introduction to A Mortal Antipathy*.

The lyrics "Old Ironsides" and "The Last Leaf" gave Holmes at the very start a secure place among American poets. The former, called by Bryant "the most spirited of naval lyrics," has been declaimed by schoolboys for more than half a century, and will probably hold its place with the half-dozen most popular poems in our literature. "The Last Leaf," which, as Professor Richardson wittily suggests, stands upon the first leaf of Holmes' published works, deserves Abraham Lincoln's characterization as "inexpressibly touching." The great statesman never tired of that exquisite minor chord,

"The mossy marbles rest  
On the lips that he has pressed  
In their bloom;  
And the names he loved to hear  
Have been carved for many a year  
On the tomb."

Had Holmes written nothing else, he would not be forgotten.

REQUIRED READING. — "Old Ironsides," "The Last Leaf," and the five humorous lyrics mentioned above.

1. "The Chambered Nautilus," which appeared first in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* in 1857, and which is the high-water mark of the poet's poetical achievement, may be taken as the representative of the more serious products of Holmes' Muse. "The Living Temple," "Voiceless," "Sun and Shadow," "The Silent Melody," "Avis," "Iris," and "Under the Violets," the best of the poems of graver moods, are also full of rare beauty and artistic symbolism. Some of Holmes' historical ballads, like "Grandmother's Story of the Bunker Hill Battle" and the "Ballad of the Boston Tea Party," are also to be classed among the poet's more serious and substantial work. In his later patriotic lyrics, the "Flower of Liberty," "God Save the Flag," and "Union and Liberty," are to be found the same passion and fire that burned so fiercely in the "Old Ironsides" of earlier years.

2. "The Deacon's Masterpiece," which also appeared first in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, is the best representative of the poet's broadly humorous work. Wit and humor, indeed, are Holmes' most prominent characteristics. As early as 1848, Lowell, in the *Fable for Critics*, wrote:

"There's Holmes who is famous among you for wit,  
A Leyden jar always full charged from which flit  
Electrical tingles of hit after hit."

Holmes' wit sparkles from every page that he has written. It is mingled with the pathos of his more serious poems, when it becomes humor of the truest kind. To divide his poems into two classes, his hu-

morous and his non-humorous work, would be to separate a few of his more serious poems from the great bulk of his poetical product. The best poems represented by "The Deacon's Masterpiece" are "How the Old Horse won the Bet," "Parson Truell's Legacy," and "The Broomstick Train."

3. **Occasional Poems.** — By actual count forty-seven per cent. of Holmes' poems were written for various occasions. During the last period of his literary life the greater part of his verses were written to order. One has only to glance over the list to realize how vast and varied were the demands made upon his Muse. Class reunions, centennials of every kind, dedications of all possible things, anniversaries, arrivals and departures of celebrated guests and prominent men, meetings of medical, agricultural, and Phi Beta Kappa societies, festivals and jubilees, all found in Holmes a ready laureate. The Muse of most poets refuses to be commanded, but Holmes' Pegasus was always bridled and ready for flight. He was never more brilliant than with "a poem served to order." At public banquets, where wit and cheer ran high, Holmes was at his best, and his sparkling verses, "popping with the corks," were always the very best thing of the occasion. Says Dr. Hale: "Perfect as they are to the reader, they are more than perfect when he stands on a bench at a college dinner and with all his overflow of humor, of pathos, and of eloquence recites them."

For half a century Holmes was the laureate of Harvard College. *Alma mater* was to him more than it has



been to any other American poet. Forty-four of his poems were written to celebrate his college class, and many others were composed for Phi Beta Kappa meetings and college celebrations. While by no means the leader of the Cambridge group of poets, Holmes seemed the one of all others most closely connected with the old college town. He seemed, indeed, almost the incarnation of the old Harvard spirit and traditions.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY.** — Read all the lyrics whose titles have been given above. Make a list of the different occasions at which Holmes served as poet. How many poems are in any way connected with Harvard? How many of his poems remind you of his profession? Have the occasional poems lost the sparkle and wit with the occasion that called them forth? How many of the poems are “metrical essays” written in the measure of Pope? What is the difference between wit and humor? (See dictionary.) How do you account for the playful touches in “The Last Leaf”? Was Holmes a true humorist like Hood and Lamb? How many of the poems are not humorous at all? Judging from his poems, what was Holmes’ attitude toward slavery? Is anything said about the negro in any of his poems? What was his attitude toward disunion? What melancholy interest attaches to the last stanza of “The Last Leaf”?

**“The New Portfolio.”** — “At thirty,” wrote the Autocrat, “we are all trying to cut our names in big letters upon this tenement of life. Twenty years later we have carved it or shut up our jack-knives.” If Holmes was busy carving during this period of his life, it must have been on the walls of the Harvard Medical School; for it was not until he had reached his forty-ninth year that he commenced the literary work that has made his name immortal. When the *Atlantic Monthly* was

founded in 1857, Lowell took its editorial chair only on condition that Holmes should contribute a series of articles to the first volume. The result was *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, one of the most original and striking contributions ever made to American literature, and from that time Holmes, the genial autocrat and prose writer, became even better known than Holmes, the poet.

His prose work falls naturally under four heads: The Autocrat series, novels, biographies, and medical essays.

1. **The Autocrat Series** consists of four books: *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1858), *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1859), *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1873), and *Over the Teacups* (1890). The plan of the series is a very simple one. Given a somewhat idealized boarding-house table with the variety of characters not unnaturally found about it; let Dr. Holmes take the lead and report the discussions, the gossipings, the sallies of wit, and the plan is complete. The chapters and books ripple on and on without restraint or definite aim; now broad and serene, reflecting the sky and the stars; now deep and dark, hiding untold things; now loitering through summer meadows or sparkling and dancing and babbling over the smooth shingle. Never were there books more delightful, with their exquisite thread of love story, their sparkling jokes and puns, their shrewd characterizations, their proverbs, their worldly wisdom, their sage observations on life and its problems. One lays down the book wondering

at the inexhaustible fountain that could have sent forth all this sparkling delight. "In these books," says the author, "I have unburdened myself of what I was born to say."

The first book of the series is the best of all. Holmes compared it to the first wine of grapes that runs off itself. "The first of my series," he said in *Over the Teacups*, "came from my mind almost with an explosion, like the champagne cork; it startled me a little to see what I had written, and to hear what people said about it. After that first explosion the flow was more sober, and I looked upon the product of my wine-press more coolly." *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*, which was written when Holmes was sixty-four years of age, is of a more serious cast than the others, dealing largely with the poet's outlook upon social, literary, and intellectual problems. *Over the Teacups* was written in the white winter of the poet's eightieth year. Its atmosphere is inevitably reminiscent and its author took no pains to hide his own personality. In many respects it is the most charming book of the series; in none of the others does one get nearer to the genial, lovable poet whom time seemed powerless to impair.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY.—Read carefully *The Autocrat* and *Over the Teacups*. Name some of Holmes' best poems that first appeared in the *Autocrat* series. Compare the essay on old age in *The Autocrat* with that in *Over the Teacups*, one written at forty-eight, the other at eighty. Is there any difference in the point of view? Make a list of some of the brightest proverbs and epigrams. What seems to you his brightest joke? Stedman says "he coins here and there a phrase destined to be long current,"—

can you find any of these phrases? Find evidence of Holmes' love of trees. Does his treatment of young poets in *Over the Teacups* seem to you unjust? Compare with the characterization of Gifted Hopkins in *The Guardian Angel*. Can you find anything in *The Autocrat* that you had thought of yourself but could not express? Which one of Holmes' characters seems to you the best drawn? Are there any characters in *Over the Teacups* that had previously appeared in *The Autocrat*? Read over the general index, Vol. X., and note how various and many were the subjects treated.

2. As a Novelist Holmes deserves more than passing notice. His three novels, *Elsie Venner* (1860), *The Guardian Angel* (1868), and *A Mortal Antipathy* (1885), are all studies of that "mysterious borderland which lies between physiology and psychology." Holmes' essay, "Crime and Automatism," might well be taken as an introduction to the series. They are all studies of various phases of the problem of heredity. *Elsie Venner*, whose aim, as its author has written, "was to illustrate this same innocently criminal automatism with the irresponsibility it implies, by the supposed mechanical introduction before birth of an ophidian element into the blood of a human being," is the strongest of the three novels. It has passages which in weird power remind one of Hawthorne. *The Guardian Angel*, a story of inherited Indian blood, contains the best of Holmes' broadly humorous characterization. But although charming in style, like everything that bears their author's name, and containing here and there passages of wonderful strength and beauty, these novels are not of the highest rank. While skilful in portraying character and abundantly able to introduce humor

and epigram, Holmes was deficient in constructive ability. Had he possessed the art and the dramatic power of a Hawthorne, he might have become the great novelist of the century.

3. **His Biographies.**—In his last years Holmes completed two memorable biographies: his *Memoirs of John Lothrop Motley* (1879), and *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (1884). Both were written after a lifelong friendship, and both contain most careful and loving estimates. Says Stedman: "He has few superiors in discernment of a man's individuality, however distinct that individuality may be from his own. Emerson, for example, was a thinker and a poet, whose chartered disciples scarcely would have selected Holmes as likely to proffer a sympathetic or even objective transcript of him. Yet when the time came, Holmes was equal to the effort. He presented with singular clearness, and with an epigrammatic genius at white heat, if not the esoteric view of the Concord Plotinus, at least what would enable an audience to get at the mould of that serene teacher and make some fortunate surmise of the spirit that ennobled it. I do not recall a more faithful and graphic outside portrait."

4. **Medical Essays.**—But after all Holmes was first of all a physician. He gave to his profession his best hours and his best years. It was not until the last of his life that he was at all sure whether he was to be remembered as a scientist or as a man of letters. Said President Eliot at the Holmes breakfast in 1879: "I know him as the professor of anatomy and physiology



in the medical school of Harvard University for the last thirty-two years, and I know him to-day as one of the most active and hardworking of our lecturers. . . . When I read his writing I find traces of this life-work of his on every page." It was indeed a remarkable versatility that could produce poems in every key, Autocrat papers, novels, biographies, and papers on "Currents and Counter-currents in Medical Science," and "The Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever." Holmes' medical essays, which were written mostly to be delivered before medical associations and college classes, are fearless and original, provoking in their day widespread discussion.

**Holmes' Place and Influence.** — (Stedman, Ch. VIII.; Richardson, I., 372; Whipple's *American Literature*; Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*; Haweis' *American Humorists*, 43.) Few authors of Holmes' depth have covered so wide a field or done their work so uniformly well. He was not a great thinker; he brought no burning message; he seldom struck the deep strata of life: but he knew the world surprisingly well and he touched its life at a thousand different points. He skimmed with wonderful grace over a vast amount of surface, but he seldom dived deep below. Like Pope, he could recut a somewhat commonplace idea until it scintillated at every point. With both it mattered not so much what? as how?

But had Holmes nothing to commend him but his wit, he would soon be forgotten. He possessed a deep vein of pathos, which, mingled with his wit, produced humor



of the genuine kind. In reading his books one may not always tell whether the tears that sometimes come are from sympathy or from laughter. It is as a humorist that Holmes will be longest remembered. "The Last Leaf," with its blended wit and pathos, will be the last leaf of his works to perish.

Holmes' hearty laugh and his keen enjoyment of the sweets of life have played their part in moulding the spirit of the century. "Whittier did more than Holmes," says J. W. Chadwick, "to soften the Puritan theology, but Holmes did vastly more than Whittier to soften the Puritan temper of the community. . . . His was 'an undisguised enjoyment of earthly comforts'; a happy confidence in the excellence and glory of our present life; a persuasion, as one has said, that 'if God made us, then he also meant us,' and he held to these things so earnestly, so pleasantly, so cheerily, that he could not help communicating them to everything he wrote. They pervade his books and poems like a most subtle essence, and his readers took them in at every breath. Many entered into his labors, and some, no doubt, did more than he to save what was best in the Puritan conscience while softening what was worse in the Puritan temper and what was most terrible in the Puritan theology. It does not appear that any one else did so much as Dr. Holmes to change the social temper of New England, to make it less harsh and joyless, and to make easy for his fellow-countrymen the transition from the old things to the new."

## XXI.

### THE CAMBRIDGE POETS (3).

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819-1891).

"No man, certainly no American, in the latter part of the nineteenth century had so various and admirable gifts — Poet, Wit, Moralist, Scholar, Diplomat, Gentleman." — *T. B. Aldrich*.

"Think, as is his due, upon the high-water marks of his abundant tide, and see how enviable the record of a poet who is our most brilliant and learned critic, and who has given us our best native idyl, our best and most complete work in dialectic verse, and the noblest heroic ode that America has produced, — each and all ranking with the first of their kinds in English literature of the modern time." — *Stedman*.

**Life.** — (The most complete and authentic biography of Lowell that has yet appeared is that by G. E. Woodberry in the American Men of Letters Series. F. H. Underwood's *Biographical Sketch* contains much valuable criticism, and E. E. Brown's *Life* can be consulted with profit. Lowell's *Letters*, edited in two volumes by Charles Eliot Norton, give many charming glimpses of the poet's personality and friendships.)

A glance at a list of birth years of great men seems to confirm the saying of Schiller that the immortals never appear alone. The year of 1807 is memorable as the birth year of Longfellow, Whittier, Richard Hildreth, and C. C. Felton; 1809 presents at the head of its list Gladstone, Lincoln, Darwin, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning,

Holmes, Poe, and Lord Houghton ; and 1819 is marked by such names as W. W. Story, E. P. Whipple, Herman Melville, Julia Ward Howe, J. G. Holland, T. W. Parsons, Walt Whitman, "George Eliot," Ruskin, Charles Kingsley, and James Russell Lowell.

Lowell was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Feb. 22, in the old mansion "Elmwood," where he passed his life. The house is still standing, a delightful structure built after the Colonial pattern, amid spacious grounds filled with ancient English elms, bounded on one side by Mount Auburn Cemetery, and a near neighbor to the "Old Craigie House," sacred with memories of Washington and Longfellow. Like Holmes and Longfellow, Lowell inherited the "cumulative humanities" of several generations of sturdy, intellectual men. The American branch of the family originated in Percival Lowell, who came to Massachusetts in early Puritan times. One of the family founded the busy city of Lowell; another endowed the Lowell Institute in Boston; Dr. Charles Lowell, the poet's father, was long the pastor of the West Congregational Church of Boston. Lowell inherited his gift of poesy, however, from his mother, who was of Scotch descent and of a highly poetical temperament, and who possessed an inexhaustible store of the old Scottish romances of the border, which "she sung over the cradles of her children and repeated in their early school days until poetic lore and feeling were as natural to them as the bodily senses." The Cambridge lad had everything to develop the poetic instinct within him: books, refined society, and the

classic influences of the old college town. Nature, too, appealed to him strongly. He delighted in the woods and fields, where he gathered the impressions that were in time to shape themselves into the noblest of nature poems.

Lowell entered Harvard at the age of sixteen and was graduated in 1838, nine years after the class immortalized by Holmes. His college career was not especially brilliant, for the reason, as he has himself confessed, that he studied everything but his text-books. Like so many other American authors, he sought the law immediately after his graduation, and in 1840 was even admitted to the bar, but to his great delight he was unsought by clients. One year later the fruits of his legal practice appeared in the volume of poems *A Year's Life*, which, although but little better than the average poet's first book, contained here and there rare promises of better work to come. In 1843 he established, in connection with Robert Carter, a literary magazine called *The Pioneer*, with Hawthorne, Poe, and Mrs. Browning as contributors, but it died after the third number. During the same year he married Miss Maria White, herself a poet of note and a prominent abolitionist, and also published his second venture in the poetical field.

**Three Periods**, more or less distinct, may be recognized in Lowell's literary life, and the lines of cleavage were much the same as those in Holmes' literary career. The first period, which opened in 1844 with the publication of his first significant book of poems, and which

was passed, with the exception of two trips to Europe, in comparative seclusion at "Elmwood," may be called the period of his greatest poetical achievement, since it witnessed the production of his most distinctly individual work, *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (1845), the first series of *The Biglow Papers* (1848), and *A Fable for Critics* (1848).

The second period, which opened in 1857 with his assumption of the chair which had just been vacated by Longfellow at Harvard, and the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, may be called the period of literary criticism. Lowell edited the first nine volumes of the *Atlantic*, and from 1863 until 1872 was joint editor with Charles Eliot Norton of the *North American Review*. His magazine articles during this time, which make up the greater part of his critical work, have been published in four volumes: *Fireside Travels*, *Among my Books*, two series, and *My Study Windows*. His editorial work, however, did not interfere with his duties at Harvard. The twenty years of his professorship there may be taken roughly as the second period of his literary life.

The third and last period of his life was marked by his national poems and addresses. Few men have been more thoroughly and proudly American than Lowell. Both series of *The Biglow Papers*, as well as his burning anti-slavery lyrics during the war, show his intense patriotism. His noble "Commemoration Ode," delivered at the close of the war, his three odes published together in 1876, and his ringing address on Democracy mark

him as one of the truest Americans of the century. Lowell was a born reformer; his hate of tyrants and demagogues was fierce and pitiless. It gave color to his whole life-work, and to fix an absolute date as the opening of this last period would be absurd. Yet the year 1876, which witnessed the publication of his *Three Memorial Poems*, and which was followed by his appointment as minister to Spain and later to the Court of St. James in England, may be taken as an approximate date. During the last twenty years of his life Lowell stood as the most eminent champion of true Americanism and pure Democratic government.

**I. As a Poet.** — While Lowell is undoubtedly the greatest literary critic that America has thus far produced, it is as a poet that he has done his most permanent work. The best of his poems represent without question the highest and most sustained flights of the American Muse. Emerson alone among our poets is to be compared with him; and yet while Emerson occasionally touched the heights, it was but to fall ingloriously. The sustained excellence of *The Vision of Sir Launfal* and "The Commemoration Ode" is hard indeed to be equalled among the poets of the Victorian era. Lowell's poetry may be divided into four classes: Poems of Nature; Humorous and Dialectic Poems; Poems of Culture; and National Poems.

**1. Poems of Nature.** — Lowell is *par excellence* the poet of June as Bryant is of autumn. In the opening lines of *Sir Launfal* and in "Under the Willows," the poet has poured forth his joy in this perfect month. How



could mere words express more of rapturous delight than that impassioned burst —

“Gladness of woods, skies, waters, all in one,  
The bobolink has come, and, like the soul  
Of the sweet season vocal in a bird,  
Gurgles in ecstasy we know not what  
Save June, dear June, now God be praised for June!”

Lowell's pictures of nature are always true and always spontaneous. Such poems as “To the Dandelion” and “An Indian Summer Reverie” came not only from an intimate knowledge of nature's secrets, but from a heart good and true.

REQUIRED READING. — “Under the Willows”; “An Indian Summer Reverie”; “To the Dandelion”; “The First Snow Fall”; “Pictures from Appledore.”

2. **Humorous and Dialectic.** — For sparkling wit and rollicking fun Lowell is to be compared only with Irving and Holmes. He was quick to see the comical aspects of his surroundings; he had an attentive ear for all peculiarities of pronunciation and diction; he was an irresistible punster and when “bound to rhyme,” as in *A Fable for Critics* and “The Unhappy Lot of Mr. Knott,” no word appalled him, —

“He nerved his larynx for the desperate thing  
And cleared the five-barred syllables at a spring.”

*A Fable for Critics*, which was published in 1848, was, like Irving's *Knickerbocker*, a *jeu d'esprit* full of the broadest fun, under much of which, however, lurked the sting of satire. Some of the criticism, as that of Poe, Bryant, Whittier, Hawthorne, Irving, Holmes,

Carlyle, and Emerson, is excellently done and in every way worthy of a place with the poet's best critical work, but the poem as a whole is marred by hastily written lines, inelegant, even coarse, expressions, and a general suspicion of flippancy.

It is upon *The Biglow Papers*, the first series of which appeared in 1848, that Lowell's fame as a humorist chiefly depends. The story of this series is best given in the author's own words.

"Thinking the Mexican War, as I think it still, a national crime committed in behoof of slavery, our common sin, and wishing to put the feeling of those who thought as I did in a way that would tell, I imagined to myself such an up-country man as I had often seen at antislavery gatherings, capable of district-school English, but always instinctively falling back into the natural stronghold of his homely dialect when heated to the point of self-forgetfulness. When I begun to carry out my conception and to write in my assumed character, I found myself in a strait between two perils. On the one hand I was in danger of being carried beyond the limit of my own opinions, or at least of that temper with which every man should speak his mind in print, and on the other I feared the risk of seeming to vulgarize a deep and sacred conviction. I needed on occasion to rise above mere *patois*, and for this purpose conceived the Rev. Mr. Wilbur, who should express the more cautious element of the New England character and its pedantry, as Mr. Biglow should serve for its homely common sense vivified and heated by conscience. The parson was to be the complement rather than the antithesis of his parishioner, and I felt or fancied a certain humorous element in the real identity of the two under a seeming incongruity. Mr. Wilbur's fondness for scraps of Latin, though drawn from the life, I adopted deliberately to heighten the contrast. Finding soon after that I needed some one as a mouth-piece of the mere drollery, for I conceive that true humor is never divorced from moral conviction, I invented Mr. Sawin for the clown of my puppet-show. The success of my experiment soon

began not only to astonish me, but to make me feel the responsibility of knowing that I held in my hand a weapon instead of the mere fencing stick I had supposed." — *Introduction to Second Series.*

Under all of Lowell's culture and learning there lurked the droll, cute Yankee, — practical, opinionated, and withal intensely free. Of all his works *The Biglow Papers* is the most original and individual; nowhere else do we get so near the poet. He was himself the original of Hosea Biglow. The crudeness and the quaint dialect alone were feigned. Every line of the poem came burning from his heart. One must laugh, and laugh immoderately sometimes, at the homely comparisons, the ingenious rhymes, the irresistible drollery of the dialect, and the curious conceits, but even the most careless cannot fail to recognize under the thin veil of fun a terrible earnestness.

The second series of *The Biglow Papers*, which appeared during the Civil War, and which voiced the poet's indignation at slavery and secession, while lacking the freshness and vigor of the earlier poems, accomplished, nevertheless, untold good for the Union cause. The two series together make up a work which may be added to the very small list of books distinctively American. Hosea Biglow and Parson Wilbur are numbered with the few great original creations with which America has enriched the literature of the world.

REQUIRED READING. — *The Biglow Papers*, first series; "The Courtin'."

3. **Poems of Culture.** — The contrast between *The Biglow Papers* and the class of poems represented by

*The Vision of Sir Launfal* is very great. Few poets in the history of literature have produced works so antithetical in every respect. *The Biglow Papers*, with their utter disregard for polish and literary art, with their burning satire, their intense convictions, and their irresistible humor, reveal Lowell in his native dress. We see in these poems the true Lowell, pouring his message from his heart without a thought of effect or of art, as did Burns and Whittier. In *The Vision of Sir Launfal* we lose sight of the poet, but we see in every line a refinement of touch that could have been gained only by careful study and by long contact with the rarest in art. *Sir Launfal*, in its exquisite workmanship, in its sentiment, its lofty conception, its descriptions, is without question "the high-water mark of American poetry." Among the best of Lowell's other poems of culture may be named "The Legend of Brittany," which in its sweet simplicity reminds one of Chaucer; "Rhæcus," which is almost Grecian in its perfect art; "A Glance behind the Curtain," "Columbus," and "The Cathedral."

SUGGESTIONS FOR A STUDY OF SIR LAUNFAL.—To what well-known English poem do ll. 9 and 10 allude? Compare the description of June here with that in "Under the Willows" and "An Indian Summer Reverie." Point out the few strokes by which the poet's picture of summer is sketched in ll. 109–118. Point out and explain the descriptive epithets in the prelude to Part Second, e.g. "steel-stemmed trees" and "silvery moss." Notice the wonderful strength and beauty of the picture of Christmas Eve in ll. 221–224. Which seems to you most beautiful, Lowell's picture of June or of December? Explain the poetic touches in ll. 216, 218, 219, 242, 245, 264. What was the legend

of the Holy Grail? Compare Lowell's treatment of the legend with Tennyson's "The Holy Grail." Explain the mediæval words in ll. 97, 128, 133, 233. What significance in Sir Launfal's setting out on his quest in June and returning in December? How can the poem be taken as a type of human life? What is the lesson of the poem? Does Stedman's remark that it is "really a landscape poem" seem to you just? Commit to memory the finest passages of the poem.

4. **National Poems.** — It is a significant fact that the larger part of Lowell's collected poems is taken up by the antislavery lyrics, *The Biglow Papers*, and the four memorial addresses, all of them poems of a national and patriotic character. Freedom was the keynote of Lowell's political creed; it rings from all of his national poems: it inspired the fierce sarcasm of *The Biglow Papers*; it rung in the noble ode that commemorated Harvard's heroic dead at the close of the war; from the *Concord Ode*, which is a rhapsody to freedom; from the *Centennial Ode*, and from the heroic verses of *Under the Old Elm*. In these odes Lowell's Muse reached her sublimest heights. The fifty-nine lines of *The Commemoration Ode*, commencing "And such was he, our Martyr Chief," and ending with the grand climax:

"Great captains, with their guns and drums,  
Disturb our judgment for the hour,  
But at last silence comes;  
These all are gone and, standing like a tower,  
Our children shall behold his fame,  
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,  
New birth of our new soil, the first American;"

and the forty lines of *Under the Old Elm*, commencing "Virginia gave us this imperial man," should be learned by heart by every American.

REQUIRED READING. — Lowell's four Memorial Odes.

II. As a Prose Writer. — Lowell's prose work is almost wholly in the form of essays, which may be divided into three classes: Essays in Literary Criticism, Sketches, and Political Essays.

1. *The Essays in Criticism*, which represent the careful study of a lifetime, are a real contribution to the critical literature of the world. The greater number of these are studies of old English poets and prose writers from Chaucer to Keats and Landor; from Izaak Walton to Carlyle. There are papers, too, on continental literature, — scholarly studies of Dante, Rousseau, and Lessing; nor are his own countrymen neglected, as the vigorous portraits of Josiah Quincy, Thoreau, and Lincoln testify. From every page of these essays shine forth evidences of rare scholarship, a wide and varied acquaintance with literature, a refined taste, a sound judgment, and a delicate humor. To one who can read them, they are delightful. They were not designed to be popular in the broad sense, — only the few can enjoy them. They imply in the reader a wide range of study and reading and a taste for the best in literature. Lowell's style is suggestive rather than direct. The reader must often use his imagination or lose the most subtle part of the author's thought. The figures, too, and the allusions take for granted on the reader's part a broad acquaintance with mythology, history, and general



literature. To the uneducated Lowell's critical essays must ever remain a closed book, but to those who can judge of them they are without question one of the rarest creations of the century in their field.

2. *Lowell's Sketches*, however, can be read with pleasure by the multitude. In such papers as "My Garden Acquaintance," "A Good Word for Winter," "A Moosehead Journal," and "At Sea," we come once more into the presence of the author himself, as we did in *The Biglow Papers*. Here again is the real Lowell, full of sparkling humor and of comradeship; wise, observant, and very close to nature. No better companion can be imagined for a garden walk, a scramble over the "Northwest Carry"; for a journey across the sea and into distant lands.

3. *Of Lowell's Political Essays* "Democracy," an address delivered at Birmingham, England, in 1884, a masterly summary of its author's political beliefs, may be taken as the best representative.

REQUIRED READING.—The essays on Chaucer, Keats, and Izaak Walton; "My Garden Acquaintance," "A Moosehead Journal," and "Democracy." Compare Lowell's "At Sea" with Irving's "The Voyage."

**Lowell's Place and Influence.** — (Stedman, IX.; Richardson, I., 416; Haweis' *American Humorists*, 81; "Lowell as a Prose Writer," Whipple's *Outlooks on Society*; Curtis' *Literary and Social Essays*; Dowden's *Studies in Literature*, 472.) In viewing Lowell's work as a whole, one is surprised first of all at the versatility of the man. He was as varied in his literary ac-

accomplishments as was Holmes. Says his biographer, Underwood:

“What adjective will convey the many-sidedness of Lowell? When we read the tender story of ‘The First Snowfall,’ the wise lessons of ‘Ambrose,’ the prophetic strains of ‘The Present Crisis’ and of ‘Villa Franca,’ the wit and shrewdness of Hosea Biglow, the delicious humor of the garrulous Parson, the delicate beauty of ‘Sir Launfal,’ the grandeur of the ‘Commemoration Ode,’ the solemn splendor of ‘The Cathedral,’ what can we do but wonder at the imaginative power that takes on these various shapes, and moves in such diverse ways to touch our souls in every part? When, in addition, we consider his vigorous, learned, and glowing prose essays, full of color like fresh studies from the fields, full of wit that not only sparkles in epigram but pervades and lightens the whole, and full of an elastic spirit such as belongs to immortal youth, we find enough to give him enduring fame if he had never written a line of verse.”

Lowell was first of all a poet. His literary criticism exquisite as it is, is inferior to his best poetical efforts. His best poems are his nature lyrics and his *Biglow Papers*. Few poets have caught so well the true poetry of nature,—the joy of June, the tipsy rapture of the bobolink, the song of the bluebird, and the icy breath of winter. In *The Biglow Papers* we have the very heart and soul of New England rural life. “No richer juice can be pressed from the wild grape of the Yankee soil.” These poems will tolerate no imitation; the Yankee dialect as a literary property was discovered by Lowell, and its discoverer spoke the last word concerning it. *The Biglow Papers* are without question Lowell’s most original and most permanent contribution to American literature.

Of Lowell's service in strengthening and broadening our literature in the critical period of its development, too much cannot be said. As editor during an important epoch of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the mouthpiece of the most remarkable group of authors that our nation has produced, and later as editor of the *North American Review*, he had a chance which is presented to few literary men. His impress on the literary product of the period is everywhere visible. There are but few of the younger school of writers who did not receive their first impetus from a kind word of criticism or encouragement from this zealous builder of American literature. Lowell's influence has extended beyond his own land. He, more than any one else of the century, "has made American letters and culture respected abroad. No one has done more than he to lessen the gulf between England and America.

**Two Minor Poets**, both born the same year as Lowell, belong inseparably with the Cambridge group.

THOMAS WILLIAM PARSONS (1819-1892), a native of Boston and educated in the Latin School of that city, went to Italy in 1836 to devote himself to the study of Italian literature, and in 1843 published the first part of his masterly translation of Dante's *Inferno*. Parsons was one of the little Cambridge circle that, with Longfellow and Lowell, devoted itself for years to the study of Dante. As a poet he produced but little. He occupies in American literature a place somewhat analogous to that held in English literature by Gray and Collins, having written only a few poems, but those of surpassing excel-

lence. Few lyrics in our literature surpass in strength and grandeur his lines "On the Bust of Dante," beginning

"See from this counterfeit of him,  
Whom Arno shall remember long,  
How stern of lineament, how grim  
The father was of Tuscan song."

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY, (1819-1895), son and biographer of the celebrated jurist, Joseph Story, and a member of Lowell's class at Harvard, after a short career as a lawyer, went to Rome in 1848 to study painting and sculpture. He soon gained wide-spread fame as a sculptor of ideal figures, his statues of Saul, Delilah, and Cleopatra in particular winning for him a high place among the artists of the century. He also became widely known as a poet. Among his published works in prose and verse may be mentioned *Roba di Roma; or Walks and Talks about Rome* (1862), *Tragedy of Nero* (1875), *Castle St. Angelo* (1877), *He and She; or a Poet's Portfolio* (1883). Many of Story's lyrics, like "In the Moonlight," "Love and Death," "In the Garden," and "In the Rain," are sweet and melodious; his dramatic studies, like "A Roman Lawyer in Jerusalem" and "Cleopatra," are often exceedingly strong and passionate, but his poems, while delicate and scholarly, form no symmetrical whole; they have no insistent and dominating note of individuality; they are un-American in theme and treatment, and they can never give their author a secure place among American poets.

## XXII.

### THE HISTORIANS.

THE second creative period of American literature, which opened with the same date as the Victorian era in England, witnessed in both countries, and indeed throughout Europe, the unprecedented development of two departments of literature, — prose fiction and historical narrative, these two becoming, during the last half of the century, the dominating forms of literary expression. The late rise and the remarkable growth of the novel has been already dwelt upon; it remains to outline the equally remarkable development in the methods of historical composition.

The historian of the old school relied largely upon hearsay; he accepted doubtful traditions, and, in the absence of evidence, sometimes accepted vague rumors or untrustworthy authorities. His books were dry chronicles of kings and battles, enlivened now and then by romantic though doubtful episodes. The modern historian, however, seeking first of all to arrive at the exact truth, spares no pains to consult every available source of authentic information. He searches the dry columns of contemporary newspapers; he unearths and deciphers old letters, memoirs, private papers, and manuscripts, and he sifts with tireless patience the innumera-

ble public documents which have been recently opened to scholars. Motley, while writing his first history, toiled for ten years through the dusty archives of Spain and Holland, sometimes for months at a time speaking to no one save his family and the librarians. Parkman visited the scene of nearly every battle described in his histories, and he could at a moment's notice verify every date and statement by copies of original documents, which he kept carefully filed away.

The modern historian, aside from patience and ability "to toil terribly," must possess a rare combination of powers. He must have sound judgment and an accurate sense of proportion to select and reject among ponderous masses of material, and to arrange all with due subordination of parts, and with a true perspective; he must possess imagination, that he may project himself into the past and actually live amid the scenes which he describes; he must have critical insight, that he may trace causes and results and pronounce accurate judgments upon men and events; and he must be master of a well-rounded prose style that he may be able to make the dry facts of his narrative as absorbingly interesting as fiction. He does not record alone the stories of wars and of state councils, but he traces as well what Macaulay terms "noiseless revolutions," the silent growth among the scenes of quiet life of new ideas and new conditions to influence the spirit of the age. Macaulay has defined the true history as "the spirit of an age exhibited in miniature."

SUGGESTED READING. — Macaulay's "Essay on History."



Since the opening of the new era in historical composition no nation has produced a more brilliant school of historians than our own. The father of American history of the modern type was JARED SPARKS (1789–1866), of Harvard College, who collected with great skill and patience the writings of Washington and Franklin, edited *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* and *The Library of American Biography*, and wrote *The Life of Gouverneur Morris*. [*Memoir of Jared Sparks*, by George E. Ellis ; Richardson, I., 454–459.] With the exception of Motley and of GEORGE TICKNOR (1797–1871), who published in 1849 the *History of Spanish Literature*, a work of the very highest rank, American historians have devoted themselves to the study of American themes. Prescott wrote of the Spanish conquests in Peru and Mexico ; Bancroft covered the history of the United States previous to the adoption of the Constitution ; RICHARD HILDRETH (1807–1865) wrote a valuable work covering the same field and extending it to 1820 [Richardson, I., 471–473] ; JOHN G. PALFREY (1796–1881) wrote the standard *History of New England* ; Parkman, in a series of books that will never be supplanted, traced the history of *France and England in North America*. Later historians, like H. H. Bancroft, Justin Winsor, John Fiske, James Schouler, J. B. MacMaster, and others, have made valuable additions to our knowledge of early American history or have brought down the history of the United States nearer to the present day. Of the early American historians four

names stand pre-eminent : Prescott, Bancroft, Motley, and Parkman.

SUGGESTED EXERCISE. — On an outline map of America write on each section the name of its historian.

1. WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT (1796–1859).

**Life** (by George Ticknor). Like most of the great creators of our literature, Prescott inherited not only a name that was already famous in American annals, but the “cumulative humanities” of a long line of men of force and scholarship. His grandfather, to go back no farther, was one of the heroic defenders of Bunker Hill, and his father was a lawyer of such commanding power that at the time of his death he was considered, by so eminent an authority as Webster, to stand “at the head of the bar of Massachusetts for legal learning and attainments.” Prescott was born May 4, 1796, in the city that eight years later was to give to the world Nathaniel Hawthorne. In 1808 he removed with his parents to Boston and three years later was admitted to the sophomore class of Harvard College. It was while he was a junior in that institution that an accident occurred which rendered him nearly blind throughout the rest of his life. A crust of bread thrown during a moment of boisterous merriment at a dinner struck him in the open eye with such force as to produce concussion of the brain. For weeks he was threatened with total blindness, but at length, recovering a partial use of his sight, he returned to Harvard, where he succeeded in completing his course with credit.

Prescott had intended to follow his father's profession, but his impaired eyesight, which threatened constantly to end in total blindness, forbade. After two years in Europe, where he consulted without relief the best oculists of the time, he returned to Boston and settled down to the work of his life, which circumstances had decreed should be the writing of the history of Spain during the romantic period before and after the discovery of America. It was a new field; Irving had done pioneer work in it, but much of it was as yet unexplored. Fortunately, Prescott, being liberally supplied with means, was able to prosecute his studies without having to be hampered by a profession. He employed a secretary, invented a writing-frame similar to those commonly used by the blind, and with great zeal and labor passed the next twelve years with the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. The difficulties in the way of the heroic worker were almost insuperable. Holmes once declared that Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* achieved itself "under difficulties hardly less formidable than those encountered by Cortez."

**The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella** was published in 1837, the year that witnessed so many notable beginnings in American literature. Its success was instantaneous, the brilliant period which it chronicled, and the sparkle and dash of its style making it, for a time, like Macaulay's *History of England*, able to "supersede the last fashionable novel on the table of young ladies." The volume shone with all the more brightness since it was then almost a solitary phenom-

enon in American literature, Irving's Spanish histories, which had but recently appeared, being the only works with which to compare it. The first volume of Bancroft's more weighty history, which had appeared three years before, had fallen from the press almost unnoticed by the multitude; Motley and Hildreth, Palfrey and Parkman, were as yet unknown.

In 1843 Prescott published the *History of the Conquest of Mexico* and four years later the *History of the Conquest of Peru*. He then commenced what he intended should be his master work, the *History of the Reign of Philip the Second*, but he had completed only three volumes, covering about fifteen years of the monarch's long reign of forty-three years, when he was stricken with apoplexy and died in the midst of his labors, Jan. 28, 1859.

**His Style.** — (Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, Vol. II.; Richardson, I., 494-501; Ticknor's *Life of Prescott*, 217-230.) The student of Prescott's style should not forget that his histories deal with a brilliant and picturesque era. The vague, mediæval background of *Ferdinand and Isabella*; the tropical Spanish character; the pageantry and pomp and romance of the Moorish wars; the discovery of a new world; the feverish dreams of gold and empire, and the mad delirium of the American conquests, — all these demanded a most gorgeous canvas. No one could be dull with such material, and Prescott, who possessed a vivid imagination and a mastery of graphic description fully equal to Cooper's at his best, could not fail of being enchantingly interesting.

He wrote ever with painstaking care; he revised his sentences with all the fastidious care of a Macaulay. "His infirmity," says his biographer, "was a controlling influence, and is to be counted among the secrets of a manner which has been found at once so simple and so charming. He was compelled to prepare everything, down to the smallest details, in his memory, and to correct and fashion it all while it was still held there in silent suspense; after which he wrote it down, by means of his noctograph, in the freest and boldest manner, without any opportunity really to change the phraseology as he went along, and with little power to alter or modify it afterwards. This, I doubt not, was among the principal causes of the strength, as well as of the grace, ease, and attractiveness of his style. It gave a life, a freshness, a freedom, both to his thoughts and to his mode of expressing them. . . . He was able to carry what was equal to sixty pages of printed matter in his memory for many days, correcting and finishing its style as he walked or rode or drove for his daily exercise."

In his field Prescott has been equalled only by Cooper and surpassed only by Parkman. The defects of his style are chiefly those of excess. The writer of graphic pictorial description must ever career upon the verge of a precipice, and Prescott, like Cooper, sometimes fell into the depths of bombast and fine writing. He delighted in battles and scenes of action, but he never, like Macaulay, sacrificed truth to rhetoric nor dragged in useless scenes to exhibit his mastery over



them. His power was chiefly that of a skilful narrator. Stripped of their pictorial effects, his histories would still be valuable, but they would lose the greater part of their charm.

**His Rank.** — From the first publication of *Ferdinand and Isabella* until long after its author's death, Prescott was ranked both at home and abroad as the leader of American historians. In later days, however, this position has been sharply questioned. Much of Prescott's early popularity was won by the brilliancy of his themes and of his rhetoric. It is now evident that his works lack the broad horizon and the critical insight which characterize the histories of Bancroft and Motley. He has been surpassed, too, by Parkman in his own field of graphic delineation. Yet Prescott's place is still an enviable one. He was wise in his choice of subjects, and exhaustive in his accumulation of materials. He had the tireless patience and the mania for exactness which are the distinctive marks of the modern historian, and his judgment as to the genuineness and value of authorities was seldom at fault. He was lacking in analytical power and philosophical insight, and lacking this, his histories can never gain a place beside the great histories that are for all time; yet with their accuracy and thoroughness and brilliancy it will indeed be long before they will be rewritten or forgotten.

**SUGGESTED READINGS.** — "The Capture of Granada," *Ferdinand and Isabella*, Vol. I., ix.; "The Character of Isabella," *ibid.*, Vol. II., xvi.; "The Battle of Otumba," *The Conquest of Mexico*, Book V., iv.



## 2. GEORGE BANCROFT (1800-1891).

**Life.** — George Bancroft was born October 3, in Worcester, Massachusetts, where his father, a noted divine, had been stationed for over half a century. His youthful surroundings, which were all of a literary and scholarly nature, early determined his future career. At the age of thirteen he entered Harvard College fully prepared, and upon his graduation four years later he went to Germany for post-graduate work. At the age of twenty he won the degree of Ph.D. from the University of Göttingen, having pursued with distinction under the best scholars of the time the German, French, Italian, Arabic, and Hebrew languages, Scripture interpretation, history, philosophy, science, and antiquities. Two years later, having studied at Berlin and Heidelberg, and having made an extended tour through Europe, he returned to America, one of the most profound and finished scholars of his day.

Bancroft's first literary work, aside from a thin volume of poems published in 1823, consisted of learned translations from the German and scholarly essays and reviews, but he soon devoted all of his energies to what was to become the chief work of his life,—an exhaustive study of the early history of the United States. The first volume of this monumental work appeared in 1834, and the final and complete edition of the twelve volumes was published just half a century later.

**Bancroft's History of the United States** is a narrative and critical account of the Colonial and Revolutionary

periods of American history. The first three volumes consider the Colonial era, the next seven volumes treat of the Revolutionary period, dividing it into five epochs, while the last two volumes describe "the formation of the American Constitution." The history ends with the adoption of the Constitution by the States and the birth of the new nation. Within its limits the work aims to be exhaustive. Everywhere is manifest the author's ruling thought, which he declared to be a "fixed purpose to secure perfect accuracy in the relation of facts, even to their details and their coloring, and to keep truth clear from the clouds, however brilliant, of conjecture and tradition." To secure this accuracy, Bancroft examined, both in America and in Europe, vast collections of documents and state papers, many of which had never before been explored. The extent and thoroughness of this preliminary work is seldom manifest to the reader. There are no references nor footnotes, and startling statements are often made with seeming carelessness. But many a critic has found to his cost that the author could verify even his most trivial statements by a formidable array of authorities.

Bancroft's history has now become the standard authority on the period of which it treats. Notwithstanding its slightly partisan nature, since it contends that the development of our government was according to the principles formulated by Jefferson and put into practice by Jackson, it is accepted with confidence by all parties. While it is not the final history of the epoch which it covers, this being as yet too near our

own day for perfect perspective and unbiased judgments, its accurate characterizations of men and events, its broad scholarship, its critical studies of causes and effects, and its swift condensation of vast amounts of information, all combine to make it one of the world's great histories.

**His Rank.** — Although Bancroft did a great amount of work as a compiler of historical collections, as editor of many valuable works, and as orator on numberless important occasions, his fame rests almost wholly upon his one great history. The literary merits of the work are very moderate. While its style is clear and definite, it is often labored and diffuse; its author lacked the art of graphic narration so fully possessed by Prescott and Parkman; his pages are often "hard reading," but his scholarship, his analytical and critical powers, and his insistence upon perfect accuracy, more than compensate for the defects of his style. Taken for all in all, Bancroft is to be compared with no modern British historian save Froude, and with no American historian save Motley.

Much of Bancroft's literary work was done amid the multifarious cares of public life. He was collector of the port of Boston in 1838, and in 1844 was an unsuccessful candidate for governor of Massachusetts. While Secretary of the Navy under President Polk, he established the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and as minister at various times to Great Britain, Prussia, the North German Confederation, and Germany, he made for himself a brilliant record as a statesman and diplomatist.

**SUGGESTED READING.** — The Battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, Vol. 4, xiii. and xiv.

## 3. JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY (1814-1877).

**Life** (by Holmes; *Correspondence of John Lothrop Motley*, edited by G. W. Curtis). The life of Motley resembles in many of its details that of his illustrious fellow-historian, Bancroft. Entering Harvard College at the early age of thirteen, he completed his course with credit and immediately sailed for Europe, where he passed the next two years at Göttingen and Berlin. Bancroft's choice of a life-work had been the ministry; Motley chose the law; but both, preferring a literary life, early abandoned their professions. Bancroft's first literary venture had been a volume of poems; Motley poured forth his youthful aspirations and visions in an incoherent, semi-autobiographical novel called *Morton's Hope*. Bancroft became the historian of the heroes of 1776 and their grand leader, Washington; Motley chronicled the heroic rising of 1576 under an equally grand leader, William of Orange. Both men honored their nation by their brilliant achievements in the diplomatic field, and both are now universally recognized as historians of the very highest rank.

The utter failure of Motley's first book did not destroy his ambition to enter the literary field as a novelist. In 1849, just ten years after his first venture, he published *Merry Mount, a Romance of the Massachusetts Colony*, a work of considerable merit. In its delineation of character, invention of circumstances, and management of plot, the book everywhere displays the crudeness of the amateur novelist; its strength lies in

its fine descriptions of nature and in the vividness and truth of its historical setting. It was evident that Motley had only to persevere in his work to become a novelist of power, but the young writer soon discovered where lay his greatest strength. Several historical studies contributed to the *North American Review* had met with a most flattering reception. He now "felt an inevitable impulse to write one particular history," the history of the rise and development of the Dutch Republic. "I had not," he wrote in 1850, "first to make up my mind to write a history and then cast about to take up a subject. My subject had taken me up, drawn me on, and absorbed me into itself. It was necessary for me, it seemed, to write the book . . . and I had no inclination or interest to write any other."

Several years of study and research on this side of the Atlantic convinced the historian that an accurate and valuable history could be written only in Europe, where he could have access to original documents and state papers. Accordingly, in 1851, he removed with his family to Germany, and during the next few years was buried in the rich archives of Berlin, Dresden, The Hague, and Brussels. The story of the historian's tireless industry in the preparation of his materials should be read by every young person with literary aspirations. To realize the full extent of his labors, one should read his letter to F. H. Underwood, quoted in Holmes' *Life of Motley*, Ch. XIV. He read all possible works bearing on his theme. The learned Dutch archivist, van Prinsterer, was amazed to find that the young historian had



read almost all the ponderous tomes in his voluminous collection. He ransacked the larger part of the libraries of Europe and explored the archives in most of the leading capitals. He had copyists in England, Spain, and The Hague, constantly engaged in transcribing for his use rare documents and state papers. He spent months with his secretary in deciphering almost unreadable letters and manuscripts. During the five years that he passed in Europe writing his first work, he confessed that he made scarcely an acquaintance except with librarians.

**Histories of the Netherlands.** — Motley's first work, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, in three volumes, which brought the history of the revolt of the Netherlands down to the death of William the Silent, was published in London in 1856. Its success was instantaneous; it was republished in New York, Holland, Germany, and France, and its author rose at once from obscurity to a place among the standard historians.

Motley started with the intention of writing an exhaustive history of that "most remarkable epoch in human history, from the abdication of Charles Fifth to the Peace of Westphalia." The general title of this work was to be "The Eighty Years' War for Liberty," and the subject was to be considered in three parts corresponding to three epochs: The Rise of the Dutch Republic; The United Netherlands bringing the narrative down to 1609; and the Thirty Years' War ending with the Peace of Westphalia. After finishing the first two epochs, Motley turned aside for a time to write



what proved to be his last work, the full title of which is *The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland, with a View of the Primary Causes of the Thirty Years' War*. "It is," comments Dr. Holmes, "an interlude, a pause between the acts which were to fill out the complete plan of 'The Eighty Years' Tragedy,' and of which the last act, the Thirty Years' War, remains unwritten."

"My subject," wrote Motley in 1859, "is a very vast one, for the struggle of the United Provinces with Spain was one in which all the leading states of Europe were more or less involved. After the death of William the Silent the history assumes world-wide proportions. Thus the volume I am just about terminating [Vol. II. *United Netherlands*] . . . is almost as much English history as Dutch." The history of the Thirty Years' War would have been in reality the history of Europe during its most stirring epoch. The long illness and early death of Motley, who was of all others best equipped to grapple with this chaotic subject, certainly robbed the world's literature of what would have been a priceless possession.

**Motley's Rank.**—(Richardson, I., 502–507; Whipple's *Recollections of Eminent Men*.) Like Prescott, Motley dealt with a most fascinating period, one that could be painted in brilliant colors. It was far enough removed for accurate perspective and everything was ready for a historian who could speak the last word concerning it. Motley united the breadth of mind and the analytical and critical qualities of Bancroft with the graphic style

and brilliant execution of Prescott. He excelled in studies of great historical personages. His pictures of William of Orange, of Philip II., of Granville, and the infamous Duke of Alva, of Elizabeth and the hundreds of other famous personages in all the courts of Europe, are drawn with all the accuracy and life of an old Dutch painting. Like Prescott, he could depict scenes of action with thrilling reality. His descriptions of the siege of Antwerp and of Haarlem, of the defence of Leyden, and of the famous episode of the Spanish Armada, are dramatic in their terrible intensity.

It is now the universal opinion of critics that Motley is not only the leader of the American school of historians, but the peer of the foremost British historians of the century.

SUGGESTED READING.—*Merry Mount*, Vol. II., chs. viii. and xvi.; "The Defence of Leyden," *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Vol. II., Part 4, ch. 2. "Queen Elizabeth," *The United Netherlands*, Ch. 41.

#### 4. FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823-1893).

**Life.** — (Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*.) The early experiences of Francis Parkman were much the same as those of all the historians of the earlier group. He was a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Harvard College; after a short visit to Europe, taken at the advice of his physician, during the last year of his college course, he commenced the study of law, but after two years in the Harvard Law School he abandoned it to devote his whole time to historical studies.

Parkman's first inspiration came from Jared Sparks, Harvard's first professor of history. Even before leaving college he had determined upon his career,—he would write the history of the long struggle between France and England for the possession of North America. He did not have to choose a subject,—his subject rather chose him. Like Motley, he became so infatuated with his theme that he could devote himself to nothing else. From the very first he perceived that to make his work in any way authoritative he must study at first hand the character and life of the Indian who figures so conspicuously during the epoch, and collect both in America and France a vast mass of state papers and other authorities.

**Studying the Indian.** — In the spring of 1846, Parkman, with a single companion, set out to study wild life in the Northwest, taking the vague trail from Fort Leavenworth up the Platte River to Fort Laramie, the route traversed fourteen years previously by Captain Bonneville, whose experiences were recorded by Irving. From Fort Laramie he went westward to the Black Hills, where he fell in with a tribe of Sioux Indians on their summer hunting expedition. For the next few weeks he lived as an Indian, sharing in all the details of savage life. He dwelt in their wigwams and partook of their coarse food; he joined in their buffalo hunts, sat at their councils, and studied closely their customs and peculiarities and ways of thinking. But the hardships which he was forced to undergo told fearfully upon him. A serious disease, which his rough life and barbarous

food constantly aggravated, fastened itself upon him. For weeks he was dangerously ill, but his iron will kept him in the saddle.

In 1847 he published an account of his adventures under the title of *The Oregon Trail*, a book that has all the thrill and fascination of a novel by Scott or Cooper. No better description has ever been written of the wild life of the West in the days when the buffalo blackened the plains and the Indian pursued his savage life untouched by civilization. The book belongs with Irving's Wild Western series, which deal with substantially the same period and territory.

Parkman's next volume, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), made deep draughts on its author's intimate knowledge of Indian life and character. In it he aimed "to portray the American forest and the American Indian at the period when both received their final doom." The author visited every scene described, and, to secure absolute accuracy of statement, examined, according to his own words, "letters, journals, reports, and despatches scattered among numerous public offices in Europe and America," which, "when brought together, amounted to about thirty-four hundred pages." Out of this dry and lifeless mass Parkman constructed a work which reads like a romance.

**France and England in North America.** — Parkman now commenced upon the work of his life, — the series of narratives that was to cover the struggle of two great nations for a continent. It was a field wholly unexplored; it was far enough removed for accurate perspec-

tive; it had sharply defined limits; its historian could approach it without prejudice; and, more than all, it was a field of vast importance. The far-reaching problems that were settled by the struggle are thus presented by the historian:

“The most momentous and far-reaching question ever brought to issue on this continent was: Shall France remain here or shall she not? If, by diplomacy or war, she had preserved but the half, or the less than the half, of her American possessions, then a barrier would have been set to the spread of the English-speaking races; there would have been no Revolutionary War; and, for a long time at least, no Independence. . . . The Seven Years’ War made England what she is. It crippled the commerce of her rival, ruined France in two continents, and blighted her as a colonial power. It gave England the control of the seas and the mastery of North America and India; made her the first of the commercial nations, and prepared that vast colonial system that has planted New Englands in every quarter of the globe. And while it made England what she is, it supplied to the United States the indispensable condition of their greatness, if not their national existence.”  
— *Preface to Montcalm and Wolfe.*

The general title adopted by Parkman for his work was *France and England in North America: a Series of Historical Narratives*. The successive volumes are: 1. *Pioneers of France in the New World*, in two parts, the first treating of “The Huguenots in Florida,” and the second of “Samuel de Champlain”; 2. *The Jesuits in North America*; 3. *La Salle; or the Discovery of the Great West*; 4. *The Old Régime in Canada*; 5. *Count Frontenac; or New France under Louis XIV.*; 6. *A Half Century of Conflict*; 7. *Montcalm and Wolfe. The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian Wars after the Conquest of Canada*, the full title of Parkman’s second book,



while not included under the general title, follows naturally as the eighth volume of the series.

**Parkman's Style and Rank.** — (Richardson, I., 482–494.) The chief value of Parkman's histories lies in their accuracy and their narrative power. The historian knew his field perfectly, and, like Motley and Bancroft, he spared no pains to verify his every statement. He had all the brilliancy of Prescott's style and more. He chose his points of view with rare skill, and so graphically did he describe what he saw that the reader lays down his narrative with a feeling almost of personal participation in the events he has read. One may seek in vain for histories more full of picturesque detail and dramatic episode. Parkman, unlike Bancroft and Motley, seldom attempted analysis or philosophic criticism. His histories are what he intended them to be, "a series of historical narratives," perfectly accurate in statement and background, thoroughly covering the epoch with which they deal, yet histories which might easily be "read by mistake as romances."

While Parkman can never take rank with the great narrative and critical historians like Froude and Motley, he has one advantage over all other historians of the century, — his work can never be done again. A historian with a broader outlook and a more tireless patience than Motley's may arise to write again the history of the Netherlands; Bancroft's work without doubt will be done again, but while future historians may increase our documentary knowledge of the French and English wars, they can never bring to their work



Parkman's preparation. He did his work at precisely the right time. The Indian of *The Oregon Trail* was substantially the Indian of the Seven Years' War, but twenty-five years later he had disappeared forever.

**Difficulties Attending His Work.** — No estimate of Parkman's work can be complete that neglects to dwell upon the difficulties with which he had to contend in the preparation of his histories. He returned from his summer in the West with shattered health. His eyes became affected so that, like Prescott, he was nearly blind throughout the rest of his life. "For about three years," he wrote in the preface to *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, "the light of day was insupportable and any attempt at reading or writing completely debarred. Under these circumstances the task of sifting the materials and composing the work was begun and finished. The papers were repeatedly read aloud by an amanuensis, copious notes and extracts were made, and the narrative written down from my dictation." Throughout his life he could command for work only the smallest portion of his time. From 1853 to 1863 he could not work at all, even the rustle of a newspaper being unbearable, but by carefully using every available moment of his life he accomplished to the full the dream of his youth. His works are not only great histories of a memorable era, they are monuments to their author's patient perseverance and unconquerable will.

**SUGGESTED READING.** — *The Oregon Trail*, Chs. XIV., XV.; *The Jesuits in North America*, or *Montcalm and Wolfe*.

## XXIII.

### THE ANTISLAVERY LEADERS.

THE intellectual and humanitarian movement which reached its flood in New England during the conjunction of Emerson, Ripley, Alcott, and their followers, spent its ebbing energies in the antislavery movement preceding the Civil War. As the bright theories of a new society founded on the principle of universal brotherhood became more and more untenable, the reformers began to turn their attention to society as it actually existed and to insist upon the correction of the most obvious evils. Of all these evils, that of slavery was most glaring. Some of the extremists, like John Brown, who started from Concord on his desperate errand in 1858, were for the instant and unconditional abolition of slavery by any means; others of the group, like Theodore Parker, waged at great personal peril a fierce war of denunciation; while others, like Emerson, used more quiet methods.

On its literary and intellectual side the antislavery movement was brought to a crisis by a comparatively small group of determined workers. Of this group Garrison was the leader, Sumner the statesman, Phillips the orator, Mrs. Stowe the novelist, and Whittier the poet. The work of this determined little band closed the period.

1. WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON (1805-1879). — (*William Lloyd Garrison: the Story of his Life told by his Children; The Moral Crusader: a Biographical Essay*, by Goldwin Smith; *Garrison and his Times*, by Oliver Johnson; *Life*, by A. H. Grimke.) When, in 1831, Garrison started his *Liberator* in Boston he had not, to his knowledge, a sympathizer in the whole nation. The antislavery principle had not anywhere one outspoken defender. All political parties either advocated the evil or compromised with it; the Constitution of the United States, in the words of Webster, "recognized slavery and gave it solemn guarantees"; even the Church was silent. Against this widespread and deeply rooted institution Garrison set himself single-handed. He was but twenty-four years of age, uneducated and penniless; "his office was an obscure hole; his only visible helper a negro boy," but his demand was the immediate abolition of slavery. He sent broadcast over the land his heroic challenge: "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice. . . . I will not equivocate, I will not excuse, I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard." He poured into his work all the boundless zeal of the fanatic. He was willing to sacrifice everything, even the Union, to gain his single point. He denounced the Church for its inactivity, and branded the Constitution as "a league with death and a covenant with hell."

There could be but one result of words poured out in such terrible earnestness. The deadness of the public mind was soon fully aroused to life. Mobs assaulted

Garrison everywhere he appeared. In 1835 he was dragged with a rope about his body through the streets of Boston. Many who had cared little for the freedom of the slaves now rallied about Garrison to defend the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. The contest became widespread and bitter beyond expression.

The writings of Garrison, although very voluminous, would not in themselves give their author literary distinction. They were simply a means to an end, a by-product from a career devoted fixedly to the accomplishment of a great purpose. His ringing orations and scathing paragraphs are now as dead as the issue that called them forth. Yet Garrison will ever hold a high place in the history of American thought and literature. While it is yet too early to estimate the true extent of his influence on the spirit of his times, it can with safety be said that this influence was widespread and vital.

2. WENDELL PHILLIPS (1811-1884). — (*Life and Times of Wendell Phillips*, by G. L. Austin; *Life*, by Charles Martyn.) During Holmes' senior year at Harvard, Sumner, Motley, and Phillips were undergraduates in the college, the last two being in the same class. Like most young graduates of their day, all three, upon leaving Harvard, looked to the law as a life-work, but Sumner, although he became an able writer on the theory of law and at one time a lecturer in the law school, soon drifted away from his profession; Motley during his two years at the Cambridge school read vastly more

history than law; and Phillips, after a brilliant law practice of several years, deliberately abandoned his profession to cast his lot with the despised abolitionists. The sight of Garrison dragged by an angry mob past the very "cradle of liberty," had filled him with furious indignation. He had wealth, position, education, brilliant legal attainments, oratorical power in an unusual degree, and he had resolved on the spot to devote them all to this downtrodden cause. An opportunity was soon at hand. In December, 1837, after violent opposition, the friends of free speech gained the use of Faneuil Hall for a public meeting to take notice of the death of Lovejoy, an abolitionist editor of Alton, Illinois, who had been killed by a mob while defending his press. But the meeting threatened to end in worse than failure. The hall became crowded with an excited mob that was soon in full possession. The leader declared, in an inflammatory speech, that Lovejoy had died as the fool dies. The moment was Phillips' opportunity. Pouring out a flood of mingled scorn, sarcasm, and denunciation, he gained the attention of the meeting, and soon with his resistless eloquence conquered all opposition. From this moment he became the recognized orator of abolitionism. His fierce appeals were heard in every city, and time and again he conquered and captivated audiences which had gathered with the express purpose of doing him bodily harm.

**As an orator** Phillips was what Henry Clay would have been with a Harvard education. To Clay's fire and magnetism he joined Everett's rhetorical art and



marvellous vocabulary. As a master of sarcasm and invective he can be compared only to John Randolph of Roanoke, and as a fierce delighter in opposition he may be compared to Webster. But Phillips' orations, like those of Clay, are hard to read. Examined in cold blood, his sentences often seem harsh and even coarse. The fire of his invective was fed at times with unseemly material and he often depended upon his consummate oratorical skill to carry sentences that will hardly pass the searching criticism of the reader.

During his last years Phillips kept alive his fame as an orator with his popular lectures on "Toussant l'Ouverture" and "The Lost Arts."

3. CHARLES SUMNER (1811-1874). — (*Memoirs and Letters of Charles Sumner*, E. L. Pierce; *The Scholar in Politics*, A. H. Grimke; *Life*, Anna L. Dawes.) In the national councils the antislavery cause had a redoubtable champion in Charles Sumner, senator from Massachusetts from 1851 until his death. With his commanding personality, vast learning, comprehensive and accurate mind, and uncompromising spirit, he was one of the most conspicuous figures of the epoch. Fame had sought him early. He was scarcely twenty-six when Carlyle, noting the admiring throngs that attended his first tour through Europe, dubbed him "Popularity Sumner." In 1845 he had won instant fame as an orator with his celebrated speech on "The True Grandeur of Nations," delivered before the authorities of the city of Boston on July 4. During the same year he had allied himself with the antislavery



party, defending his position in several powerful orations. Sumner's work in the Senate was brilliant and effective. So thoroughly did he devote himself to his cause that his orations, which fill twelve volumes, are almost a complete "history of the antislavery movement in its connection with national politics."

To his friends Sumner was the embodiment of generosity, refinement, and good-fellowship, but to his enemies he seemed selfish, domineering, and even boorish. So intensely was he hated by the pro-slavery element, that in 1856, after his powerful oration on the wrongs of Kansas, his enemies determined to silence him, employing for that purpose one Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina, from whose hands he received, while sitting at his desk at the Senate, injuries that enfeebled him for several years and indirectly caused his death. But Sumner's inflexible integrity, and his intolerance of injustice and of sordid aims, were acknowledged even by his foes.

**As an orator** Sumner was logical and convincing. While he had not the tact and fire of Phillips, his orations were, nevertheless, impetuous and overwhelming. They forced conviction, point by point, by a culmination of arguments seemingly unanswerable. The power of his orations has not departed with the occasions that called them forth. They are still full of life and beauty. The reader is surprised at the wealth of scholarly allusion, and the brilliancy, at times, of the rhetoric. The style is stately and finished. Many of the orations, strongly in contrast with those of Phillips, rise at times almost to sublimity. On the whole, the orations

of Sumner are an addition to American literature only less important than the work of Webster, Choate, and Everett.

REQUIRED READING.—“The True Grandeur of Nations,” or “The Crime against Kansas.”

4. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE (b. 1812).—(*Life*, by C. E. Stowe.) For two generations the Beecher family figured prominently in the history of American literature. During the first half of the century Dr. Lyman Beecher, a preacher of unusual force and effectiveness, was the leader in the attack upon Unitarianism. His son, HENRY WARD BEECHER (1813–1887), became the most famous of American pulpit divines, and not to mention others of the family, his daughter, Harriet, lived to write the most popular and effective novel in the language.

It seems well-nigh impossible to view the life of Harriet Beecher Stowe save from the standpoint of her one great achievement. She wrote other stories as thrilling, others much more perfect in literary art; she made studies of the Yankee character and dialect that are worthy of comparison with those of Lowell; she made sketches of life and character that are irresistibly humorous and pathetic, and she wrote several poems and hymns that are of surpassing sweetness, but to the world she is simply the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Other facts seem superfluous. The story of her life must lead quickly to this one major fact and dwell there.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* is one of those literary phenomena

that come unheralded and unaccounted for. Its author had received an education befitting the daughter of a New England minister, had taught for a time in the schools, and when, in 1832, her father became president of Lane Seminary, had removed with him to Ohio, where some years later she was married to Calvin E. Stowe, a professor in the seminary. In 1849 she published a promising volume of short character studies entitled *The Mayflower; or Sketches of the Descendants of the Pilgrims*; and two years later, as a result of this volume, she received a check for \$100 from the editor of *The National Era*, an antislavery paper in Washington, with the request that she write as much of a story of slave life as she could for the money. Thus supplied with a subject, she began to write. She had never been an ardent abolitionist, though she sympathized warmly with the antislavery workers; she had seen something of slave life in Kentucky, but she knew little of slavery as it actually existed in the cotton States of the South. The head of a large household with narrow means, she had scant time to devote to literary work. She had intended to write only a short tale of slave life, but the work grew, month by month, until in a year and a half it had become a complete novel.

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in book form in Boston in 1852. The story of its success almost exceeds belief. Seventy thousand copies were disposed of before the critics could write a word; 80,000 more were ordered faster than the publishers could turn them from their presses. In 1855 the *Edinburgh Review*

declared that "by the end of November 1852, 150,000 copies had been sold in America, and in September of that year the London publishers furnished to one house 10,000 copies per day for about four weeks."

It was translated into the French (three versions), German (fourteen versions), Danish, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Welsh, Russian, Polish, Hungarian, Wendish, Wallachian, Romanic, Arabic, and Armenian, and it has since appeared in Chinese, Turkish, Japanese, and many other tongues.

Its influence on the times can hardly be estimated. It did more, perhaps, to precipitate the war than did any other single influence. In vain did its enemies parody its thrilling, sometimes sensational, scenes; in vain did they argue that it pictured the exception and not the rule, that such monsters as Simon Legree existed only in the rarest instances. The masses in the North, believing it an accurate picture of daily scenes in the South, read its pages with horror and growing indignation. From a literary standpoint the novel has many defects. As a work of art it is not to be compared with many of its author's later productions. It often exhibits hasty work; its situations are sometimes melodramatic and its characters conventional; but its very defects increased its popularity, which has not for a moment waned. It is now the most widely read novel in the language, and to very many foreigners it is almost the sole representative of American fiction.

**Tales of New England Life.** — After publishing another antislavery novel, *Dred: a Tale of the Great*

*Dismal Swamp*, which was soon obscured in the fierce light of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Mrs. Stowe turned her attention to the field of her first choice, — studies of New England village life. Of these the best are *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), *The Pearl of Orr's Island* (1862), *Oldtown Folks* (1869), and *Sam Lawson's Fireside Stories* (1871). Had she written nothing else, these would still give her a high place among American novelists. Full of genuine humor and skilful characterization, intensely faithful to the region and the time which they portray, and as sweet and gentle of tone as the tales of Jane Austen or Maria Edgeworth, they form a priceless addition to our literature. In *Sam Lawson* Mrs. Stowe added one more real creation to the gallery of fiction, — a Yankee as droll and shrewd as Hosea Biglow himself.

REQUIRED READING. — *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; *Oldtown Folks*.

## 5. JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807–1892). —

“The Poet of New England. His genius drew its nourishment from her soil, his pages are the mirror of her outward nature, and the strong utterance of her inward life.” — *Parkman*.

“Taken for all in all, Whittier, ‘our bard and prophet best-beloved,’ that purely American minstrel, so virginal and so impassioned, at once the man of peace and the poet militant, is the Sir Galahad of American song. He has read the hearts of his own people, and chanted their emotions, and powerfully affected their convictions. His lyrics of freedom and reform, in his own justified language, were ‘words wrung from the Nation’s heart, forged at white heat.’ Longfellow’s national poems, with all their finish, cannot rival the natural art of Whittier’s. They lack the glow, the earnestness, the intense characterization, of such pieces as ‘Randolph of Roanoke,’ ‘Ichabod,’ and ‘The Lost Occasion.’” — *Stedman*.



**Life.** — (The authorized biography of Whittier is Samuel T. Pickard's *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*. Excellent studies of the poet's life and writings have been written by F. H. Underwood, by W. S. Kennedy, and by W. J. Linton. See also Stoddard's *Homes and Haunts of our Elder Poets*, Miss Mitford's *Recollections*, and Griswold's *Home Life of Great Authors*.) Whittier was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, Dec. 17, 1807. His father, the tiller of a rocky little farm burdened with debt, was a fine specimen of the New England yeoman of the early days, — God-fearing, hardworking, intensely practical; his mother, a typical housewife of the old school, not only attended to her kitchen and dairy, but spun and wove and made all the garments for her household. There was little in the boy's early life and surroundings to develop poetic taste. There were no luxuries and few holidays. Bryant, Emerson, Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell had been the culmination of long lines of scholarly men; had grown up amid refining influences with books for daily companions, but Whittier had no family traditions save those of poverty and toil, and his life until early manhood was passed in the dreary round of farm labor. A few weeks of district school in the winter gave him his early education. Of his literary advantages he has left an interesting account.

"We had only about twenty volumes of books, most of them the journals of pioneer ministers in our society. Our only annual was an almanac. I was early fond of reading and now and then heard of a book of biography or travel and walked a mile to borrow



it. When I was fourteen years old my first schoolmaster, Joshua Coffin, the able, eccentric historian of Newbury, brought with him to our house a volume of Burns' poems from which he read, greatly to my delight. I begged him to leave the book with me and set myself to the task of mastering the glossary of the Scotch dialect at its close. This was about the first poetry I had ever read—with the exception of the Bible, of which I had been a close student—and it had a lasting influence on me. I began to make rhymes myself and to imagine stories and adventures. In fact, I lived a sort of dual life in the world of fancy as well as in the world of fact about me."

It was Burns, then, who awakened the slumbering genius of the boy. One of these early poems, a crude and callow production, fell into the hands of Garrison, who was then editor of the Newburyport *Free Press*, and by great good fortune it was published. Others followed and Garrison, becoming interested in the young poet, visited him at the farm at Haverhill, and gave him visions of an education. After six months in Haverhill Academy, where he supported himself by making shoes, Whittier went to Boston as a writer for *The American Manufacturer*, and soon afterwards he became editor of *The Hartford Review*, of Connecticut, where he remained for several years.

**Legends of New England.**—Whittier began his literary career under the impression that there was a rich mine of poetry and romance in the history and traditions of the Indians,—a delusion that was widespread during the early years of the century. Eastburn's *Yamoyden*, which appeared in 1820, had been for a time the most popular work in American literature. This poem, and Dr. Palfrey's review of it which had been the direct

cause of the novel *Hobomok* by Lydia Maria Francis (Child), furnished inspiration to a throng of romantic young poets, of which number Whittier was one. His first published volume, *Legends of New England, in Prose and Verse* (1831), a series of tales which he had gathered about many a winter hearthstone in his native town, was followed in 1836 by *Mogg Megone*, a long poetical effort after the manner of *Yamoyden*, and in 1848 by *The Bridal of Pennacook*. In later years Whittier smiled at much of this early work. Of *Mogg Megone* he wrote: "Looking at it at the present time it suggests the idea of a big Indian in his war paint strutting about in Sir Walter Scott's plaid." *The Bridal of Pennacook* contains one gem, "The Merrimac," but aside from this and its descriptions of New England scenery, it has little value.

**Voices of Freedom.** — Whittier's literary career may be divided into two distinct periods, the first characterized by his work as an antislavery advocate and the second by his ballads and lyrics of New England rural life. His early work in the field of Indian legend was not significant; it had fallen from the press unheeded, partly because of its lack of commanding strength, but more because of its author's out-spoken position on the slavery question.

Whittier inherited with his Quaker blood what he declared to be

"A hate of tyranny intense,  
And hearty in its vehemence  
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own."

With his gentle nature and boundless respect for the rights of others, he looked upon human slavery with unfeigned horror. It was but natural, then, when his earliest friend, Garrison, began his crusade against the evil, that Whittier should join him with all his heart. In 1833 he became one of the secretaries of the first National Antislavery Convention. In 1837 he was in the office of the American Antislavery Society in New York, and the next year he edited *The Pennsylvania Freeman* in Philadelphia, where his office was sacked and burned by a mob. He lectured constantly, often narrowly escaping personal violence from mobs, and, until the war was over, ceased not to pour out a torrent of indignant verse which he scattered through the newspapers of the land. In 1849 he made his first collection of these lyrics under the title *Voices of Freedom*, in which he gave vent to his soul without a thought of art or, indeed, of anything save his burning message. The verses became war cries "that stir the blood," in the words of Bryant, "like a trumpet calling to battle." Few poems in the language have more vigor and fire. Their influence in moulding the spirit of the North, while not to be compared with that exerted by *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was, nevertheless, an important one.

The close of this first period in Whittier's literary life is marked by the appearance of the stirring lyric, "Laus Deo," written on hearing the bells ring out the news of the passage of the Constitutional amendment prohibiting slavery, a poem Hebraic in its exultation. How could mere words express more of fierce joy?

“It is done!  
 Clang of bell and roar of gun  
 Send the tidings up and down.  
 How the belfries rock and reel!  
 How the great guns, peal on peal,  
 Fling the joy from town to town!

• • • • •  
 “Loud and long  
 Lift the old exulting song;  
 Sing with Miriam by the sea,—  
 He has cast the mighty down;  
 Horse and rider sink and drown;  
 ‘He has triumphed gloriously!’

• • • • •  
 “Ring and swing,  
 Bells of joy! On morning’s wing  
 Send the song of praise abroad!  
 With a sound of broken chains  
 Tell the nations that He reigns,  
 Who alone is Lord and God!”

REQUIRED READING. — “The Virginia Slave Mother’s Lament,”  
 “Ichabod,” “Laus Deo,” “The Pine Tree,” “Our State.”

“**The Heart of New England.**” — Although, during the antislavery period of his career, Whittier’s best gifts, as he expressed it, were laid on the shrine of freedom, he found time, nevertheless, to write many songs and ballads of New England life and legend; but when the war was over he gave his whole heart to this one work. Few poets of any land have clung to their native soil with a love more real and vital. He could say from his heart:

“Then ask not why to those bleak hills  
 I cling, as clings the tufted moss,

To bear the winter's lingering chills,  
The mocking spring's perpetual loss.  
I dream of lands where summer smiles,  
And soft winds blow from spicy isles ;  
But scarce could Ceylon's breath of flowers be sweet  
Could I not feel thy soil, New England, at my feet."

What Scott and Burns were to Scotland, Whittier was to New England. He touched her life at every point. For the cold facts concerning her history and people one may go to Palfrey, but for her heart and soul one must read the poems of Whittier. In them one sees not only a perfect picture of stream and mountain, of wildflower and forest bird, but loving studies of that sturdy people who have been the bone and sinew of American grandeur.

1. *Idyls.* — *Snow Bound, a Winter Idyl*, which stands as the most characteristic of all Whittier's work, is a series of "Flemish pictures" drawn lovingly from memories of his own early years. Besides being, as Burroughs declares it, "the most faithful picture of our Northern winter that has yet been put into poetry," it is a perfect portrayal of the inner home life of rural New England. As a work of art *Snow Bound* is well-nigh flawless, in every way worthy of comparison with such gems as "The Cotter's Saturday Night" and *The Deserted Village*.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING "SNOW BOUND." — What is an idyl? What other idyls can you mention? Note that the poem opens abruptly as though it were a ballad. What is gained by this device? Are there any needless strokes in the picture of the storm and its approach? Is everything true to nature? Do snow

storms come in a similar way in your latitude? Compare the lines describing the storm with Emerson's "Snow Storm." Which seems to you the more vigorous? Make an outline of the poem noting each step in its development. Note the unities, — first, of time; second, of place; third, of action. Compare in this respect with *The Biglow Papers* and *Evangeline*. To which does the poet devote the most attention, — the picture of a New England storm, or of a New England rural home? In what respects does the poem resemble "The Cotter's Saturday Night?" Note the skill with which Whittier introduces his characterizations, using the storm as a background. How did Goldsmith introduce his characterizations in *The Deserted Village*? Compare the schoolmasters in the two poems. Which one of the talkers about the fire did not give reminiscences? Note the varied pictures, skilfully introduced, of New England life and nature at all seasons. What facts for a biography of Whittier could be gathered from this poem? Does he neglect to make known his position on the antislavery question? His Quaker training? Note the paucity of Whittier's early library. What touches show the sweet beauty of the poet's character? Describe a few paintings that might be made from the descriptions in *Snow Bound*.

Among Whittier's other New England idyls drawn with loving care from memories of early days, the best known are "The Barefoot Boy," "In School Days," "Telling the Bees," the *Songs of Labor*, "Among the Hills," and "Maud Muller."

REQUIRED READING. — "The Barefoot Boy," "Telling the Bees," "Among the Hills," and "Maud Muller."

2. **Ballads.** — As a ballad writer Whittier has had no equal among American poets, — not even in Longfellow. His ballads, which make up a surprisingly large part of his work, possess every requisite, being "narrative in substance, lyrical in form, traditional in origin,"



and, withal, vivid and rapid in execution. Their subjects are nearly all from early New England history and tradition. Some of them, like "Pentucket," "The Norsemen," and "The Funeral Tree of the Sokokis," deal with the very earliest times in New England; others, like "The Garrison of Cape Ann," "Cobbler Keezar's Vision," and "The Double-headed Snake of Newbury," touch upon the popular superstitions of the early days. In "Cassandra Southwick," "The Exiles," "The King's Missive," "How the Women Went from Dover," and many others, the poet chose a subject very near his heart,—the early persecutions of the Quakers; while in many more, like "Mary Garvin," "John Underhill," "The Witch's Daughter," "The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall," "Parson Avery's Swan Song," "The Palatine," "Abraham Davenport," and "Amy Wentworth," he dealt with the varied scenes and incidents of early Puritan life. So thoroughly did Whittier weave into these ballads the life and episodes of Colonial days that from them might be constructed almost a complete outline of early New England history.

REQUIRED READING. — "The Funeral Tree of the Sokokis," "Cassandra Southwick," "The Witch's Daughter," "Abraham Davenport."

3. **Nature Lyrics.** — (See Burroughs' "Nature and the Poets" in *Pepacton*.) As a poet of nature Whittier is surpassed only by Bryant. All of his New England poems are full of touches which show his deep love for the mountains and woods and fields. He loved the very soil of his native valley and he made of it classic

ground. The Merrimac was to him what the Afton was to Burns, and what the Wye and the Duddon were to Wordsworth. It ripples through many of his sweetest poems. The mountains, too, whose child it is, were also dear to Whittier's heart. Bryant exulted in the broad arches of the forest, and in the vast sweep of the prairies, but Whittier delighted in the mountains with their varied moods, their shifting lights and shadows, their "cloudy mantles," and their vast forms "against the blue walls of the sky." By a comparatively few exquisite lyrics he made himself the acknowledged laureate of the White Hills of New England, as Hawthorne is their romancer and Starr King their historian. Whittier has also, like Longfellow, sung surpassingly well of the Northern Atlantic coast, as was befitting a poet who in childhood during nights of storm

"heard the roar  
Of ocean on his wintry shore,"

and like Bryant he could paint with true tints the Northern Indian Summer. There are few autumn pictures in our literature more perfect than the prelude to "Among the Hills," "The Lumbermen," "The Huskers," "The Corn Song," and "The Pumpkin."

"Whittier's poems of Nature are characterized by poetic elements which are not common among descriptive poets. They are not enumerative, like the landscapes that form the backgrounds of Scott's metrical romances, but suggestive; for though there is an abundance of form and color in them, their value does not depend upon these qualities so much as upon the luminous atmosphere in which they are steeped. They are more than picturesque, in that

they reveal the personality of their painter—a personality that, changing with the moods they awaken, is always tender and thoughtful, grateful for the glimpses of loveliness they disclose, and consoled with the spiritual truth they teach.”—*Stoddard*.

REQUIRED READING.—“The Merrimac,” “Our River,” “Mountain Pictures,” “Sunset on Bearcamp,” Prelude to “Among the Hills,” “The Tent on the Beach,” “Hampton Beach,” “The Lumbermen,” “The Corn Song.”

**Whittier's Rank.**—(Stedman, Ch. IV.; Richardson, II., 173–186.) Whittier's rank as a poet must depend more and more upon his lyrical studies of his native New England. His songs of freedom, notwithstanding their vigor, are constantly losing their interest as the great events, of which they are a part, fade into the past; but his idyls and songs of humble life are as secure in their immortality as are those of Burns. Whittier won his place among American poets not in spite of his want of early culture, but rather on account of it. A broad education would have smoothed and refined his verses, but it would also have taken away much of the simple idyllic beauty which is now their chief charm. His were “native wood-notes wild,” often crude in form, awkward in rhyme, and homely in thought, but nevertheless intensely original and sincere. He was near the soil, he knew by heart the “simple annals” of humble life, and he poured out without a thought of books the songs that came to his lips. Thus, though he covered minutely only one section, he is recognized both at home and abroad as the most national of our poets, a singer distinctively a product of American soil.

Whittier never married. After the death of his

mother he made his home with his sister Elizabeth, a rare woman, who, herself a poet, was thoroughly in sympathy with his work. After her death, in 1864, he lived for the rest of his life with relatives at Oak Knoll, near Danvers, Massachusetts, where he died Sept. 7, 1892, the last, save Holmes, of the great singers of the Augustan period of American literature.

## XXIV.

### THE DIFFUSIVE PERIOD.

1861—.

FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE PRESENT TIME.

ALTHOUGH the Civil War closed, in all its phases, the great intellectual and humanitarian movement that was the distinctive feature of the second creative period, and although it made a violent break in American civil history, it, nevertheless, made no sudden change in the character of the literary product, or in the centres of literary production. The date 1861 is chosen as the close of the period simply for convenience. It is evident that the second creative period, which had an unmistakable individuality, ended at some time long before the close of the century. The sharply defined group of which Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell were the leaders, all, save Poe and Prescott, lived to see the Civil War, and many lived and wrote until late in the century; but in 1895 only Mrs. Stowe and a few minor writers remained. Then, too, the more prominent writers of the present day had achieved literary distinction long before the war opened. It being, therefore, impossible to determine the exact limits of the period, the year

1861, which marks a notable epoch in the development of the American spirit, has usually been chosen as its close.

**Songs and Lyrics of the War.**—The chief literary results of the war were a few notable martial lyrics, composed for the most part during the heat of the struggle, and the orations and addresses of Abraham Lincoln. The fame of several poets rests almost wholly on their war poems. Among such may be mentioned HENRY HOWARD BROWNELL (1820–1872), called by Holmes “Our Battle Laureate,” who wrote, from the full knowledge of a participator, two stirring poems, — “The Bay Fight,” describing the battle of Mobile Bay, and “The River Fight,” describing the passage of the forts near New Orleans; and FORSEYTH WILSON (1837–1867), whose “The Old Sergeant” was at one time wonderfully popular. In the same connection may be mentioned JULIA WARD HOWE (b. 1819), who, although she has published several books of verse and an appreciative *Life of Margaret Fuller*, will be remembered chiefly on account of her “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” A few other famous lyrics of the war, like Whittier’s “Barbara Frietchie,” T. B. Read’s “Sheridan’s Ride,” Stedman’s “Cavalry Song,” Francis M. Finch’s “The Blue and the Gray,” and the anonymous “The Confederate Flag,” pronounced by Richardson to be “the gem of the Southern poetry of the Civil War,” deserve a passing mention. Of songs, too, those genuine bits of passion that burst from the heart of every great war, the civil struggle, like the Revolution, produced its



full share. In the North, George Frederick Root with his "Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys are Marching," and Walter Kittredge with his "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground," furnished song and words for the men at the front; while in the South, James R. Randall with "Maryland, my Maryland," called by one writer "the Marseillaise of the Confederate cause," and Albert Pike with "Dixie," fired with zeal the Confederate heart.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865). — (See Lowell's *My Study Windows*.) In prose the chief productions inspired by the war were, without question, two or three addresses delivered by President Lincoln. His address at the dedication of the National Cemetery on the battlefield of Gettysburg, Nov. 19, 1863, and his second inaugural address, delivered March 4, 1865, stand with the great orations of the century. "A man of humble birth and ungainly manners, of little culture beyond what his own genius supplied," Lincoln was, in the words of Lowell, "the wisest statesman and most pregnant speaker of [his] generation." His oratory is in marked contrast with that of Webster and Everett and the early school of orators; it has no studied periods and elaborately wrought climaxes; it has little of ornament or of inspiration; it is simply the words of a man whose heart was deeply stirred, who, speaking as Whittier sang, without a thought of art or of effect, poured out words that are unsurpassed in simple beauty, dignity, and even grandeur. Emerson, in his essay on "Eloquence,"

wrote: "I believe it to be true that when any orator at the bar or in the Senate rises in his thought he descends in his language, that is, when he rises to any height of thought or passion, he comes down to a language level with the ear of all his audience. It is the merit of John Brown and of Abraham Lincoln—one at Charlestown, one at Gettysburg—in the two best specimens of eloquence we have had in this country."

Lincoln's orations are short when compared with the labored efforts of a Webster or a Choate, and they were not written with literary intent, yet few productions in American literature are more certain of immortality.

REQUIRED READING.—Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and his second Inaugural Address.

**Histories of the War.**—Since the close of the war numerous histories of the struggle have been written. For the Northern side the story has been told by Horace Greeley, John W. Draper, Benson J. Lossing, and Vice-President Wilson; on the Southern side by Jefferson Davis, A. H. Stephens, and E. A. Pollard, but none of the histories is by any means a final one. The authors were too near the epoch described and too much influenced by bitter memories and prejudices. The final history of the struggle will not be possible for a century at least. Its historian, however, will find a wonderful mass of material awaiting his hand. Frank Moore's *Rebellion Record*, a collection of facts and documents on a vast scale; the *Memoirs* of Grant, Sher-

man, Sheridan, and other generals; Nicolay and Hay's exhaustive *Life of Lincoln*, — one of the best biographies of the century, — and the histories that have been published of numerous regiments and divisions, form a mass of raw material such as few historians of any epoch have ever had at command.

**The Diffusive Period.** — The years since the war are too near for perfect perspective. The candle held in hand seems as powerful as the Drummond light in the distance, and the same principle holds true in literature. Time is the only infallible critic. Poe's *Literati* and Griswold's *Poets of America* are monuments to the worthlessness of contemporary criticism, and with such monuments in view it behooves the literary historian to move carefully, to be blinded by no contemporary fame, however brilliant, and to beware of prophecy however alluring the temptation. The literary history of the past thirty years, however voluminous it may be in the works of a century hence, as written to-day must necessarily be brief. In writing it we have attempted to deal only with writers whose place has become somewhat established, and with books that have survived the ordeal of at least a decade.

What the critics of a century hence will determine upon as the dominating characteristic of the present period can only be conjectured, but as viewed from a contemporary standpoint it seems a period of diffusion. The vastness and variety of the literary product at the present time almost exceed belief. Books and magazines on every topic and in every tongue pour in floods

from the press. "Tones and tendencies" all seem toward confusion. American literature is no longer local either in spirit or in place of production. While Boston has not lost any of her old literary spirit, New York, having surpassed her through mere size and mere superiority of numbers, is now the chief literary centre. Literature has become a commodity, and New York is the commercial metropolis of America. And yet literature is by no means confined to New York. Every city across the Continent is now a literary centre; the books that overrun the news-stands reflect the hues of every soil.

Amid all this host of book-makers there is none that measures up to the stature of Longfellow and Hawthorne, and the other leaders of the early school. It is a period of minor poets and novelists. The spirit of the age is materialistic rather than idealistic. The vast strides in science, invention, and enterprise have reacted on the literary product. Novels and poems, having become mere commercial commodities, are now manufactured in cold blood at specified times, at specified rates, and while fierce competition has greatly raised the standard of mere literary art, it has not breathed into the product that indefinable *something*, the presence of which makes a work immortal.

The writings of the period may be considered under three heads: 1. The Later Poets; 2. The Later Novelists; and 3. Miscellaneous Writers.

## XXV.

### THE LATER POETS.

#### I. THE NEW YORK GROUP.

DURING the middle years of the century, while the powerful voices of Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell were leading the chorus of New England song, a secondary group of younger singers, many of them natives of the Middle States, gathered in New York City about the stalwart figure of Bayard Taylor. The movement was a significant one. As the poets of the older school became silent, one by one, the less powerful voices of Taylor and Whitman, and of the little transplanted group of New England singers, —Stoddard, Stedman, and Aldrich,—began more and more to be heard, until New York in time became the poetical centre, and these poets the leaders of American song.

Among the older members of the group were the four Pennsylvanians,—Read, Boker, Leland, and Taylor. Of these THOMAS BUCHANAN READ (1822–1872), a landscape painter of high rank, is remembered in literature chiefly from his spirited lyric, “Sheridan’s Ride,” and his “Closing Scene,” a poem about which clings all the melancholy beauty of the Indian Summer, which it describes. GEORGE HENRY BOKER (1823–1890) is almost

the only American who has succeeded with that most difficult of literary productions, the drama. His *Calynos*, *Anne Boleyn*, and *Francesca da Rimini* possess the rarely combined merits of stage adaptability and high literary art. Boker's lyrical work is marked by a sweetness of verbal melody and a lilting, tripping movement very pleasing to the popular ear. Such songs as "The Lancer's Song" and the "Dirge of a Sailor," and such lyrics as "On Board the Cumberland," "A Ballad of Sir John Franklin," and "The Ivory Carver" show a power over words and an intensity of imagination rare indeed among American poets. CHARLES GODFREY LELAND (b. 1824), although the author of several books on the Gipsy race and language, concerning which he is the standard authority, is best known from his *Hans Breitman Ballads* written in the dialect of the Pennsylvania Dutch. His "Hans Breitman gif a Barty," the opening poem of this collection, has had a marvellous popularity.

REQUIRED READING. — Read's "The Closing Scene"; Boker's "The Dirge of a Sailor" and "The Ivory Carver"; Leland's "Hans Breitman gif a Barty."

# I. BAYARD TAYLOR (1825-1878).

(See *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor*, by Marie Hansen Taylor and Horace E. Scudder.) In Bayard Taylor we find for the first time an American poet of high rank whose genius was nurtured and developed outside of the New England environment. He stands as a strong evidence for the statement made earlier in the work that the Pennsylvania Quakers differed but



little, either in spirit or in surroundings, from their Puritan neighbors and persecutors. (See p. 53.) An interesting parallel might be drawn between Taylor and Whittier. Both came from humble Quaker homes, both passed their early years in the dreary round of farm life, and both, revolting in early manhood from the ancestral career, secured a meagre education and entered upon journalism as a life-work. But a spirit of wandering, of which Whittier had not a trace, was upon Taylor, to drive his life into channels widely different from those chosen by the elder poet.

Taylor's boyhood visions of European travel were realized before he had completed his nineteenth year. By the aid of a few dollars earned by the publication of a thin volume of youthful verse entitled *Ximena*, and circulated among his friends, the young printing-office apprentice was enabled to visit New York where, with letters from Griswold, who had taken a fancy to some verses contributed to *Graham's Magazine*, he obtained aid and encouragement from Willis, Horace Greeley, and others. With scarce one hundred and forty dollars in money and the promise of scanty compensation for letters written from Europe, Taylor began his wanderings. During the two years that he was abroad he "travelled on foot," according to his own statement, "upwards of three thousand miles in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and France." The strictness of his economy during this time may be judged from the fact that the entire journey cost less than five hundred dollars, nearly all of which was earned upon the road.

**Views Afoot**, a classic among books of travel, appeared in 1846. Its charm lies in its freshness and novelty. Taylor, like Irving and Willis and Longfellow, had approached Europe with a feeling almost of reverence. To the youthful eyes of all these writers everything was new and full of intense and romantic interest. A holiday spirit and the zeal and zest of youth breathe alike from Irving's early English sketches, from *Pencilings by the Way*, *Outre Mer*, and *Views Afoot*. All are records of poetical pilgrimages, but none is more poetical than *Views Afoot*. All of Taylor's descriptions are full of poetic touches. The cliffs at Fairhead were to him like "Niagara Falls petrified"; "the white houses of Gmunden sank down to the water's edge like a flock of ducks," and the valley of the Arno was to him "a vast sea, for a dense blue mist covered the level surface through which the domes of Florence rose up like a craggy island, while the thousands of scattered villas resembled ships, with spread sails, afloat on its surface." The book is a gallery of pictures of familiar and unfamiliar Europe. In his wanderings on foot from city to city through the "by-ways of Europe," Taylor saw much that the average tourist, following the beaten track, never encounters. His book became instantly popular; it carried Taylor's name everywhere and placed him at the head of the younger writers of the metropolis.

REQUIRED READING. — *Views Afoot*, Ch. I. "The Voyage" (compare with Irving's Essay in *The Sketch Book*); Ch. VI. "Some of the 'Sights' of London" (compare with Irving's "Westminster Abbey"); Ch. XXII. "Vienna"; Ch. XL. "Rome"; Ch. XLVI. "A Glimpse of Normandy."

**His Travels.** — Taylor, like Ulysses, has

“become a name  
For always wandering with a hungry heart.”

Scarcely was he settled in his new field of labor in New York City when he was sent by *The Tribune* to the newly discovered gold fields of California. Two years later he started on a journey of fifty thousand miles through Egypt and Central Africa, India, China, and Japan. In 1856, he visited Sweden, Norway, and Lapland. He was secretary of Legation in Russia in 1862, and was American minister at Berlin at the time of his death in 1878.

- 1846. *Views Afoot.*
- 1850. *Eldorado.*
- 1854. *A Journey to Central Africa.*
- 1854. *The Lands of the Saracens.*
- 1855. *A Visit to India, China, and Japan.*
- 1858. *Northern Travel.*
- 1859. *Travels in Greece and Rome.*
- 1859-1862. *At Home and Abroad.*
- 1867. *Colorado.*
- 1869. *By-ways of Europe.*
- 1872. *Travels in Arabia.*
- 1874. *Egypt and Iceland.*

All of Taylor's journeyings were poetical pilgrimages. His later books of travel, while less exuberant and less romantic than *Views Afoot*, are, nevertheless, the journals of a poet on his wanderings. Their style is simple and straightforward, yet it communicates by some subtle process the author's boundless enthusiasm and his delight in strange scenes and adventures. Taylor is an ideal travelling companion. He knows what is worth seeing and he enlivens the way with tale and jest and merry song.

**As a Poet.** — But the passion and dream of Taylor's life was poetry. His widespread fame as a wanderer rather annoyed than pleased him, and the flood of prose

that flowed for years from his tireless pen was regarded by him only as a means of support. His one literary ambition was to reach the heights of poesy, to be numbered among the great bards of the world, and he all but attained to his exalted ideal. His first poetic period, like that of most poets, was distinctively lyrical. He wrote, in every key and in every measure, lyrics that in coloring and theme are cosmopolitan. Few poets of any land have gathered sweets from fields more numerous and diverse. One can trace his trail from his first journey to his last by the lyrics that he dropped at frequent intervals. In his maturer years, having wandered in all lands, and having "drunk life to the lees," he returned to where life began; wrote sweet idyls and pastorals of his native state, and from his rich experience attempted, what he meant should be his master works, odes and dramatic poems with themes of the loftiest kind. But he had misjudged his powers. The poems which are the ripe fruit of his life and on which he staked his fame as a poet, while they are noble additions to the literature of the world, lack the crowning touch that makes a work immortal. None realized this better than Taylor himself, and he died, his friends tell us, a disappointed man. It was his fate to come within sight of the land of immortality and yet be doomed never to enter its bounds.

**Romances and Lyrics.** — During the purely lyrical period of Taylor's life he produced his

*Rhymes of  
Travel, Ballads  
and other  
Poems.* 1848.

most characteristic and pleasing work. In a few of his earlier lyrics, like "Moan, ye

Wild Winds," written after the death of the wife of his youth, "Metempsychosis of the Pine," "Hylas," "Proposal," "Euphoration," and in his magnificent *Poems of the Orient*, he reached poetic heights that have been seldom attained by American lyrists. The most remarkable series of his lyrics is, perhaps, his *Poems of the Orient*, poured out in rapid succession during his months in Egypt, Syria, and the far East. Taylor was indeed "a western Asiatic." Beneath his new-world exterior he had

*A Book of Romances, Lyrics and Songs.* 1851.  
*Poems of the Orient.* 1854.  
*The Poet's Journal.* 1862.

"The rich, voluptuous soul of Eastern land,  
 Impassioned, tender, calm, serenely sad."

He caught at once the true spirit of the Orient,—its languorous beauty, its passion and its dreams. "He captured," says Stoddard, "the poetic secret of the East as no English-writing poet but Byron has." His passionate "Bedouin Song" is worthy of comparison with the best of Byron's Eastern lyrics or with such a gem as Shelley's "Lines to an Indian Air." Where in American literature are there lines so full of passion and fire?

"From the Desert I come to thee  
 On a stallion shod with fire;  
 And the winds are left behind  
 In the speed of my desire.  
 Under thy window I stand,  
 And the midnight hears my cry:  
 I love thee, I love but thee,  
 With a love that shall not die  
 Till the sun grows cold,  
 And the stars are old,  
 And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!"

REQUIRED READING. — “Metempsychosis of the Pine,” “Proposal,” “Euphorion,” “Autumn Pictures” (compare with Bryant’s “Death of the Flowers”). From *Poems of the Orient*: “The Poet in the East,” “Desert Hymn to the Sun,” “Nubia,” “Bedouin Song” (compare with Shelley’s “Lines to an Indian Air”), “To a Persian Boy,” “On the Sea,” “L’Envoi.”

**Home Pastorals and Ballads.** — The second important division of Taylor’s poems consists of his Pennsylvania pastorals and idyls. Like Whittier, the poet had sprung from the soil, and though he wandered under all suns till he became the most complete cosmopolitan of his generation, he never forgot his origin. Again and again he wandered back to his native scenes, and at last he built him a home in the town of his birth, where he might pass the ripe years of his old age. His bucolics, like those in *Home Pastorals*, with their faithful pictures of the rural seasons, remind one strongly of Whittier, and his idyls of home life, such as “The Quaker Widow,” “The Holly Tree,” and “The Old Pennsylvania Farmer,” might have been written by the New England “Quaker Bard.” Indeed it is not difficult to conceive how Taylor, had he been content to spend his life in quiet amid the scenes of his youth, might have done for Pennsylvania what Whittier did for New England.

Taylor’s narrative poem *Lars ; a Pastoral of Norway*, his most carefully wrought and symmetrical production, has in it a strength and sweetness that make it worthy of comparison with Longfellow’s *Evangeline*.

REQUIRED READING. — “August.” (Note autobiographical touches.) “The Quaker Widow,” “The Old Pennsylvania Farmer.”



**Last Poems.** — During the last years of his life Taylor composed four notable dramatic poems. No American poet has attempted themes more lofty. Into these works Taylor threw all of his broad culture and experience; his knowledge of humanity, and his mastery of literary art. They are the highest expressions of the American mind in their department, which is that of the “loftiest or religious division of the drama, the highest form of literature.”

*The Picture of St. John.* 1869.

*The Masque of the Gods.* 1872

*The Prophet: a Tragedy.* 1874.

*Prince Deukalion: a Lyrical Drama.* 1878.

**His Versatility.** — In the extent and variety of his powers Taylor resembled Holmes. He entered almost every field of literary production and always with credit. He wrote four novels: *Hannah Thurston*, *John Godfrey's Fortune*, *The Story of Kennet*, and *Joseph and his Friend*, — all of them valuable additions to the best department of American fiction. *The Story of Kennet*, “a true idyl of Pennsylvania country life in the early prime,” is its author's best prose work. He also won laurels as a translator, his version of Goethe's *Faust*, made in the original metres, being universally considered the best English translation of that great drama.

Taylor's mind was retentive and electric. “Nothing that he learned,” says his friend Stedman, “was forgotten, and he learned without effort. After a single reading he knew a poem by heart, and he could repeat whole pages of his favorite authors; and there was little that he did not read or see.” His industry was tireless. Notwithstanding his extensive travels, his endless “hack

work " as a member of the staff of a city daily, his almost nightly lectures, he found time during his literary life of thirty-four years to write thirty-seven volumes. No constitution could long endure such a draft upon it. He died of overwork in the prime of his years and the fulness of his powers.

**His Character and Rank.** — (Stedman, 396–434; Richardson, I., 439–441, II., 246–248.) Taylor, like Longfellow and Whittier, was a poet whose life and character were as sweet as his songs. "To think of him," says Stedman, "is to recall a person larger in make and magnanimity than the common sort; a man of buoyancy, hopefulness, sweetness of temper, loyal, shrinking from contention, yet ready to do battle for a principle or in the just cause of a friend; stainless in morals, and of an honesty so natural that he could not be surprised into an untruth or the commission of a mean act."

As a poet he stands without question at the head of the later school of lyrists, and he ranks only a little below the four great poets of the Golden Age of American song.

## 2. RICHARD HENRY STODDARD (b. 1825).

Intimately connected with the name of Bayard Taylor is that of his life-long friend, R. H. Stoddard. The two

*Songs of Summer.* 1856.

*Life of Humboldt* (prose). 1860.

"The King's Bell." 1862.

names go as naturally together as those of Drake and Halleck. Born the same year, in widely differing environments, they first met each other in 1848, when both were

struggling for literary recognition in the then unliterary atmosphere of New York, and from this time they became an untold strength to each other. Stoddard had come from Hingham, Massachusetts, where he had passed his childhood within sound of the sea, whose salt was in his blood. He had removed to New York in 1835, where, after a short school life, he had settled down to the task of bread-winning by the hardest of physical toil. During the early years of his friendship with Taylor, he passed his days in an iron foundry, and only once a week could the two enthusiasts find time to discuss together in their attic rooms their dreams and enthusiasms. Taylor was the "intellectual stimulant" that brought to life the powers of the young iron worker, who already burned with aspiration to be a poet. In those days "I had no friend," declares Stoddard, "except himself, no companionship but that of books and my own thoughts." The friendship was a golden one for Taylor also. Despite his uncongenial environment, and his lack of a systematic education, Stoddard had managed to read widely and well; he was already a master of poetical technique, an authority on the English poets, and a judge of poetic merit, whose decisions were seldom at fault. The two poets were complements of each other; what one lacked the other could supply. Taylor, in his "Proem Dedicatory" to *Poems of the Orient* has exquisitely described the domain held in fee by each:

*Abraham Lincoln; an Horatian Ode.* 1865.

*Putnam the Brave.* 1869.

*The Book of the East.* 1869.

*Under the Evening Lamp* (prose).

“ You strain your ears to catch the harmonies  
That in some finer region have their birth ;  
I turn, despairing, from pursuit of these,  
And seek to learn the native tongue of Earth.  
In ‘ Fancy’s tropic clime ’ your castle stands,  
A shining miracle of rarest art ;  
I pitch my tent upon the naked sands,  
And the tall palm, that plumes the orient lands,  
Can with its beauty satisfy my heart.”

Stoddard’s first volume of poems appeared in 1849. He succeeded in selling one copy, after which he destroyed the rest of the edition. During the same year he was married to Miss Elizabeth Barstow, a poet and novelist of more than ordinary merit. The union has been an ideal one, reminding one, in its perfect felicity and helpfulness, of that between Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. Three years after his first volume Stoddard published another, and in 1856 he put forth his *Songs of Summer*, which contains much of his strongest work, and which gave him at once a secure place as a poet.

From 1853 to 1870 Stoddard found employment in the New York Custom House, where, like Charles Lamb in the East India House, he filled volumes with figures, when he should have been filling other volumes with the creations of his art. But literature, even a quarter of a century ago, was safely pursued only as an avocation. From 1860 to 1870 he varied his custom-house work by reviewing books for the New York *World*, and in the latter year he resigned his position to devote his whole time to literary pursuits. Since 1880 he has been literary critic for the New York *Mail and Express*.

**As a Poet.** — Stoddard belongs to the purely imaginative school. He has a passionate love of the beautiful that reminds one of his early master, Keats. His poems are spontaneous and impassioned, yet in them all there is not a single inartistic or faulty line. Like Poe and Aldrich, he has pruned his work with remorseless care. He has the rare gift of being able to apply his broad critical powers to his own work as if it were the production of another, and he has not hesitated many times to reject that which a less conscientious poet would have left unquestioned.

Stoddard's poems may be divided roughly into two groups: his scholarly and deeply imaginative poems, like "The Search for Persephone," "The Children of Isis," "History," and "Dies Natalis Christi," and his more purely emotional lyrics. It is from these heart-poems that he is most widely known as a poet, and it will be through them that he will longest keep his name from oblivion. Lyrics like "The Flight of Youth," "At Rest," "Out of the Deeps," and "The Dead" find an echo in every heart. "The King's Bell," a rhymed poem of more than eleven hundred lines, his longest poetical effort, is fully equal to the best of Taylor's narrative poems.

**REQUIRED READING.** — "Hymn to the Sea," "An Old Song Revised," "The Flight of Youth," "Birds," "The Two Brides," "Irreparable," "At Rest," "Out of the Deeps," "The Dead," "Pain in Autumn," "Up in the Trees," "Songs Unsung," and "The Search for Persephone."

**As a Prose Writer.** — Stoddard's numerous prose arti-



cles, which are scattered through the magazines and newspapers of half a century, and which have never been collected, consist chiefly of criticism and literary biography. His wide reading in all fields of literature, and his intimate personal acquaintance with most of the men who have made American literature, give his words always a peculiar weight and authority. His most faithful and characteristic prose work is, perhaps, his study of the life of Edgar Allan Poe.

### 3. EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN (b. 1833).

Like Stoddard, whose name is so often mentioned with his, Stedman is not a native of the city with whose

*Poems, Lyric  
and Idyllic.*  
1860.

*Rip Van Winkle  
and his Wonder-  
ful Nap.* 1870.

*The Victorian  
Poets.* 1875.

*Hawthorne, and  
other Poems.*  
1877.

*Lyrics and  
Idyls.* 1879.

*Poets of Amer-  
ica.* 1886.

*The Nature and  
Elements of  
Poetry.* 1892.

life he has become so completely identified.

He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and

received his education at Yale. At the age

of twenty-four, after having edited for a

time the Norwich, Connecticut, *Tribune*

and later the Winsted *Herald*, he went to

New York, drawn thither, like so many of

the metropolitan group of authors, by the

great magnet, journalism. His next ten

years were years of struggle. He wrote

his soul into poems which he contributed

to the magazines, supporting himself meanwhile by work

of every description for the city dailies. In 1861 and

1862 he was war correspondent for the New York *World*.

When, in 1860, he published his first significant volume,

*Poems, Lyric and Idyllic*, his name had already begun

to be mentioned with those of his seniors in the poetic



field, — Taylor and Boker and Stoddard, — but his war lyrics brought him into universal notice. So rapidly did his fame as a versatile and graceful poet increase, that in 1864, to secure means and leisure for independent literary work, he abandoned journalism and became a broker in Wall Street. The tandem, business and literature, went smoothly together. He was enabled to purchase an elegant city home, which he filled with a wealth of books and beauty, and which he soon made the literary centre of New York. In 1883 he lost the most of his wealth, but by hard work he has since made good his losses. He is now in the fulness of his strength and literary activity, the most conspicuous figure in the best American literary circles.

**As a Poet.** — (Richardson, II., 256–265, Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*.) Stedman, Stoddard, and Aldrich are the leaders of what may be called the later school of lyrists. Their common characteristics are their fastidious care for the technique of their art, their graceful, polished lines, and their ability to deal with subjects which many poets would consider too trivial or commonplace for poetic use. Their knowledge of literature is deep and broad, and they apply their scholarship and critical powers to the improvement of their own work. As a result, one may search in vain through the works of all these poets for a single inelegant or slovenly line.

Stedman, like Aldrich, though in a less degree, may be called a poet of the artificial. He has written a few idyls with consummate skill, but his best and most char-

acteristic poems are those dealing with various phases of artificial life. He is not a poet of nature; he is seldom spontaneous; he is, save at rare intervals, intellectual and self-conscious. The most spontaneous of his lyrics are his songs, like "The Wedding Day," and some of his more thoughtful and serious poems, like "The Undiscovered Country" and "The Discoverer." The latter, which seems to me the loftiest expression of Stedman's lyric muse, is in all respects worthy of a place beside Taylor's "Euphorion." To these poems, which in their perfect art seem as artless and simple as wild flowers, may be added the idyls of New England life inspired by memories of earlier days. "The Doorstep" is worthy of comparison even with Lowell's "The Courtin'"; "Country Sleighing" is a faultless picture, and "The Freshet," "The Heart of New England," and "The Lord's Day Gale" might have been written by Whittier. Stedman's strength, however, lies in what might be paradoxically called idyls of city life. He has made himself the laureate of New York. "Peter Stuyvesant's New Year's Call," in which the redoubtable Hollander has a dream of his city's future glory, "Fuit Ilium," suggested by the destruction of an old colonial mansion, and "Pan in Wall Street," "the one classic inspiration of the great money market," stand at the head of these lyrics of the town.

By far the greater portion of Stedman's poetical work is made up of his ballads and lyrics of the war, his poems on contemporary themes, and his occasional poems. In the first division fall the pre-Rebellion

ballad, "How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry," with its ringing stanza of prophecy destined to be fulfilled; "Alice of Monmouth: an Idyl of the Great War," a long poem full of thrilling pictures of battle, touching episodes, and charming descriptions of quiet scenes in New Jersey life and landscape; and several stirring lyrics like "Fort Sumpter," and "Wanted — A Man." The spirited "Cavalry Song," a little lyric of three stanzas in Part IX. of "Alice of Monmouth," is probably the best known of Stedman's poems. Much of Stedman's time for poetic composition has been spent in the construction of purely ephemeral work, — the celebration of contemporary events of passing importance. Productions like "The Diamond Wedding," a long poem celebrating a brilliant society event, and "The Prince's Ball," describing the reception of the Prince of Wales by New York society, though full of wit and satire and very popular in their day, are now well-nigh forgotten. Among his occasional poems, which are many, and which cover a wide range, may be mentioned "Gettysburg," read in 1871 at the annual meeting of the Army of the Potomac, "The Dartmouth Ode," 1873, and the scholarly ode, "Corda Concordia," read at the 1882 session of the Concord School of Philosophy. His long poem "Hawthorne," read in 1877 before the Harvard Phi Beta Kappa, may be taken as his loftiest and most sustained poetical address. Its portrayal of Hawthorne's life and character reveal the poet hand in hand with the critic. To Stedman, Hawthorne was "the one New Englander" and the one modern portrayer of the human heart.

"None save he in our own times so laid  
 His summons on man's spirit; none save he,  
 Whether the light thereof was clear or clouded,  
 Thus on his canvas fixed the human soul,  
 The thoughts of mystery,  
 In deep hearts by this mortal guise enshrouded  
 Wild hearts that like the church bells ring and toll."

REQUIRED READING. — Early Poems: "In Bohemia" and "Penelope." (Note the influence of Tennyson's "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" and "Ulysses.") Thoughtful and serious: "The Undiscovered Country" and "The Discoverer" (cf. Taylor's "Euphorion"). Songs and Idyls: "The Wedding Day," "The Doorstep," "Country Sleighing," "The Lord's Day Gale." City Lyrics: "Peter Stuyvesant's New Year's Call," "Fuit Ilium," "Pan in Wall Street." War Ballads: "How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry," "Alice of Monmouth." Occasional: "Hawthorne."

**As a Critic.** — Stedman stands after Lowell at the head of American literary critics. He has chosen a difficult field of labor, — the consideration of what, remembering the long vista of English literature, one might call the contemporary English-writing poets. No criticism calls for riper judgment, wider scholarship, and more complete catholicity, than that which attempts to give absolute values to contemporary products. That Stedman has succeeded in this difficult field is in itself almost a complete testimonial to his powers as a critic.

The two volumes, *The Victorian Poets* and *The Poets of America*, cover that rich period of minor song which opened both in England and America in 1837. The reader will seek long for more charming books of criticism. They are not dry, lifeless estimates of authors and books; they are in themselves creations, full of rare

characterization, subtle analysis, epigram, gems of poetry from the best hands. The reader may not always agree with the critic, as in his estimate, for instance, of Whitman, but he cannot fail to admire the brilliancy of his treatment and the thoroughness of his mastery of the subject. *The Poets of America* is by all means the most complete and scholarly study that has yet been made of the American Parnassus, and it is thus a book indispensable to the student of American literature. Stedman's latest critical work, *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*, a book which with wide horizon and deep scholarship considers the best poetical products of all nations and times and the laws governing their production, is in its field one of the strongest creations of the century.

Stedman's mind is retentive and flexible. His vast stores of knowledge are always at instant command. His literary taste is fastidious, his sense of harmony delicate, his judgments as to poetic merit rarely at fault. He has what seems out of place in a critic, a kindly heart. Few indeed are the writers of the younger generation who have not received from him a helping word. With his powers now at their best and his pen "at topmost speed," it is not hazardous to prophesy stronger work from him in the future than he has as yet given us.

#### 4. THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (b. 1836).

Although a native of New Hampshire, born and reared in the old seaport town of Portsmouth and although



"Pampinea."  
1861.

*Cloth of Gold.*  
1874.

*Flower of Gold.*  
1881.

"Friar Jerome's  
Beautiful  
Book." 1881.

*Out of his Head.*  
1862.

*Story of a Bad  
Boy.* 1870.

*Marjorie Daw.*  
1873.

*Prudence Pal-  
frey.* 1874.

*The Queen of  
Sheba.* 1877.

*The Stillwater  
Tragedy.* 1880.

*From Ponka-  
pog to Pesth.*  
1883.

*An Old Town by  
the Sea.* 1883.

since 1866 a resident of Boston, Aldrich is always mentioned with Taylor and Stoddard and Stedman. During the fifteen years of his residence in New York, he became so completely a member of this little group of poets and so thoroughly imbued with its spirit that his name seems out of place when classed elsewhere.

Aldrich became a resident of New York in 1853. His plans for a college education and a literary career had just been rudely overturned by his father's sudden death, and he had come to the city to accept a position in the counting-room of his uncle.

But his tastes and inclinations were far from mercantile. He employed his leisure

hours in writing romantic lyrics, some of which crept into the newspapers; he drifted into the little Bohemian circle of poets and literary enthusiasts who had gathered about Taylor and Stoddard, and he soon resigned his desk to devote himself, like the rest of the group, to poetry, supporting himself, meanwhile, by newspaper work. In 1855, while yet in his uncle's office, he published his first volume, *The Dells*, a small collection of youthful verse, which fell unnoticed from the press. The next year, however, he won immediate and widespread popularity with his "Ballad of Babie Bell," a touching poem of child death, and from this time his literary advance was swift and sure. He was for three years on the editorial staff of *The New York*



*Home Journal*, then under the management of Willis and Morris; he was editor of *Every Saturday* in Boston from 1870 to 1874, and editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* from 1881 until 1890 (Stedman, 440, 441; Richardson, II., 265-269; Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*).

**As a Poet.** — "In lyric poetry," says S. R. Driver, "the poet gives vent to his personal emotions or experiences, his joys or sorrows, his cares or complaints, his aspirations or his despair; or he reproduces in words the impressions which Nature or history have made upon him." Judged by this definition, Aldrich, more than any other American poet since Poe, is distinctively a lyricist. His characteristic poems are drawn from the depths of his heart and experience, but he is not content to give them forth spontaneously and thoughtlessly; he must cut them with infinite care, and burnish them into dainty forms until they become brilliants. What many another poet would be content to leave in massive proportions, Aldrich polishes into a tiny gem, exquisite in its beauty. What vistas and abysses of thought one may catch in each facet of such a lyric as "Identity."

"Somewhere, — in desolate, wind-swept space,  
In twilight land, in No-man's land, —  
Two hurrying shapes met face to face  
And bade each other stand.

"And who are you?' cried one, agape,  
Shuddering in the gloaming light;  
'I do not know,' said the other shape,  
'I only died last night.'"

Aldrich stands at the head of American writers of *Vers de Société*, poets who "amid all the froth of society feel that there are depths in our nature that even in the gaiety of drawing-rooms cannot be forgotten," who write "the poetry of bitter-sweet of sentiment that breaks into humor." Poems like "Comedy," "Destiny," "Palabras Carinosas," and "On an Intaglio Head of Minerva," may be taken as representatives of his best work in this field.

Like Taylor and Stoddard, Aldrich has always delighted in dreams of the East and the South. What a wealth of fancy are in "Dressing the Bride," and "How the Sultan goes to Ispahan"; what passion and languorous beauty in "Pepita," "The Sultana," and "Pampinea." But the poems that have won the popular heart are those perfect lyrics written for the most part in the poet's earlier years, when the wine of song flowed of itself from the vintage. Few indeed are those who love poetry and beauty who have not in their memories stanzas of lyrics like "Nameless Pain," "Before the Rain," "After the Rain," "Tiger Lilies," "Snow," "Castles," "Piscataqua River," "The Voice of the Sea," "The One White Rose," and "The Night Wind." Not often has the poet succeeded with long poems. His longer pieces, like "Windham Towers" and "Mercedes," are of moderate interest. Among the best of these, perhaps, are his monastic legends, "The Jew's Gift," "The Legend of Ara Cœli," and that sweet story, "Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book," that might have been told by the Spanish Jew in *The Tales of*

*Wayside Inn.* Of his other longer poems, "Spring in New England" may be mentioned as the best poetical effort inspired by the Northern Memorial Day.

Aldrich loves colors, sweet odors, and mere sensual beauty as passionately as did Keats. He is a worker in words, — a painter using words as pigments. He has succeeded as few other Americans have with that most artificial of verse forms, the sonnet. He is a poet of nature, yet he sees nature always through a golden mist of romance. His descriptions are worked out with all the minuteness of detail of a pre-Raphaelite picture, — indeed many of his lyrics might have been written by Rossetti himself. With what a wealth of color and fulness of detail has he elaborated pictures like this :

"And now the orchards, which were white  
And red with blossoms when she came,  
Were rich in autumn's yellow prime :  
The clustered apples burnt like flame,  
The soft-cheek peaches blusht and fell,  
The ivory chestnut burst its shell,  
The grapes hung purpling in the grange."

Or this :

"We knew it would rain, for the poplars showed  
The white of their leaves, the amber grain  
Shrunk in the wind, — and the lightning now  
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain."

Aldrich's field is a limited one, yet within his limits he is a perfect master. "He is the celebrator," says W. H. Bishop, "of everything bright and charming, of things opalescent, rainbow-hued, of pretty women, roses, jewels, humming-bird and oriole, of blue sky and sea,

and the daintiest romance of the daintiest spots of foreign climes."

REQUIRED READING.—Oriental Pictures: "Dressing the Bride," "When the Sultan goes to Ispahan," "Pepita," "Pampinea," "The Sultana." Poems of Moods: "An Untimely Thought," "Destiny," "Rencontre," "Nameless Pain," "Before the Rain," "After the Rain," "Snow," "Castles," "Piscataqua River," "Tiger Lilies," "The Voice of the Sea," "May," "The One White Rose," "The Night Wind," "At Two and Twenty," and "Amontillado." Monastic Legend: "Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book." Sonnets: "Sleep," "Pursuit and Possession," "Fredericksburg," "Barberies." Other Lyrics: "Spring in New England," "On an Intaglio Head of Minerva," "Comedy."

As a Prose Writer.—In 1870 Aldrich published *The Story of a Bad Boy*, a book which, drawn from memories of his own early days in Portsmouth, has in it all of the romance of boyhood as seen through the mists of gathering years. Its wit and pathos, its thrilling situations, and its brilliant prose style made it at once a classic among American juveniles. During the next ten years Aldrich put forth his *Marjorie Daw and Other Stories* and his three novels, *Prudence Palfrey*, *The Queen of Sheba*, and *The Stillwater Tragedy*. "Marjorie Daw" may be taken as the best representative of its author's short stories. Sparkling with wit, and full of irresistible scenes and droll characterizations, it leads the reader on and on till of a sudden it drops him into a cleverly concealed pitfall and leaves him to his fate. The novels are tales of New England village life, idyllic in tone, and full of their author's charming personality. Their chief merit lies in their minute carefulness of diction, their sparkling wit, and their clever characteri-

zation. *From Ponkapog to Pesth*, a series of sketches of European travel, graphic and witty, appeared in 1883, and *An Old Town by the Sea*, a loving study of his native Portsmouth, appeared ten years later.

Aldrich resigned the editorship of *The Atlantic* in 1890 to devote his time wholly to literary production, and, as he is as yet in the prime of his powers, much work of no uncertain quality may be confidently expected from his pen.

**Later Poets.** — Of the younger poets of the metropolis, Richard Watson Gilder (b. 1844) and Edgar Fawcett (b. 1847) deserve passing mention. There seems to be something in the atmosphere of New York conducive to conscientious poetic workmanship. Nearly all of her poets, following perhaps the difficult precedent set by Stoddard and Stedman and Aldrich, have been literary artists who have labored over their work as a lapidary toils over a gem. Gilder and Fawcett have been no exceptions. Gilder's *Five Books of Song* (1893), which contains all of his poetic work, is a casket of brilliants whose beauty is due largely to their cutting. As the editor of *The Century Magazine*, Gilder has become one of the most influential of American literary men. Fawcett, who has written voluminously in almost every department of literature, has published *Fantasy and Passion*, a volume of lyrics well described by its title, and *Song and Story*, a later collection. H. C. Bunner (b. 1855), the editor of *Puck*, has written many finished lyrics of the *Vers de Société* order, the best of which are contained in *Airs from Arcady*.

## XXVI.

### THE LATER POETS.

#### II. THE NEW YORK GROUP.

##### 5. WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892).

“The poet of Democracy.”

“In absolute ability he is about equal to Taylor, Stoddard, Stedman, or Aldrich ; but by minimizing the spiritual and the artistic, and magnifying the physical and the crudely spontaneous, he has attracted an attention among critics in America, England, and the Continental nations greater, for the moment, than that bestowed upon any contemporary singer of his nation, and fairly rivalling the international adulation of his exact opposite, Poe.” — *Richardson*.

**Life** (by William Clark ; *Walt Whitman as Poet and Person*, by John Burroughs ; *Autobiographia*, the story of Whitman's life told by selections from his prose writings). Walt Whitman was born of plain, yeoman stock at West Hills, Long Island, thirty miles from New York City. His early surroundings resembled those of Whittier and Taylor. “The clothes,” says Burroughs, “were mainly homespun. Journeys were made by both men and women on horseback. Both sexes labored with their own hands, — the men on the farm, the women in the house and around it. Books were scarce. The annual copy of the alma-

*Leaves of Grass*.  
1855.

*Drum-Taps*.

*Specimen Days  
and Collect*  
(prose).

*November  
Boughs* (prose).



nac was a treat and was pored over through the long winter evenings."

But before Whitman was five years old his parents removed to Brooklyn, where the lad soon became a complete metropolitan. He attended the public schools for a short time, became a lawyer's office boy, and at length a compositor on *The Long Island Patriot*. His after career was a varied one. "I have," he said in his seventy-third year, "passed an active life, as country school-teacher, gardener, printer, carpenter, author, and journalist, domiciled in nearly all of the United States and principal cities North and South,—went to the front (moving about and occupied as army nurse and missionary) during the Secession War, 1861 to 1865, and in the Virginia hospitals and after the battles of that time, tending the Northern and Southern wounded alike,—worked down South and in Washington city arduously three years,—contracted the paralysis which I have suffered ever since, and now live in a little cottage of my own, near the Delaware in New Jersey."

**Leaves of Grass.** — Whitman commenced his literary career much as did his brother poets of the metropolis. He wrote short tales of a sentimental, moralizing nature, as was the fashion of the time; and he tried his hand at poetry written in the ordinary metres. But the lyric was too delicate a reed upon which to voice his "barbaric yawp," and he soon exchanged it for an unwieldy instrument of his own construction. The literary form of his choice is a fantastic sort of chant, unrhymed and unrhythmical, obeying no laws save those dictated by its

maker's caprice. Its user has unlimited license. Its lines may contain two words or two hundred, and there are no words in the language or expressions or combinations of words that may not be admitted at any point. It has been compared to the literary form used by the Hebrew prophets; to some of the forms used by Matthew Arnold and other English poets; to literal translations of Homer and Vergil, but it really resembles none of these. It is intensely individual, bearing on every line the peculiar stamp of Walt Whitman.

*Leaves of Grass*, in its first incomplete form, appeared in 1855. The public received it in uncomprehending silence, but Whitman, nothing daunted, still went on with his "easily-written, loose-fingered chords." At length Emerson, always on the lookout for marked individuality, recognized the new form of verse, and immediately the fortunes of the poet began to mend, but it was not until after the war that he became at all well known. A peculiar circumstance brought him into notice. He was dismissed from the Interior Department at Washington on account of the alleged immorality of his book, when all at once from both England and America there arose a host of defenders of "the good, gray poet" who at that time had reached the patriarchal age of forty-six. A spirited discussion began which soon went to absurd lengths on either side. The English poet, W. M. Rossetti, at the head of the so-called "Whitmaniacs," boldly asserted that Whitman was the great representative American Poet, while the other side as emphatically declared that he

was no poet at all. The truth undoubtedly lies between these extremes, but the controversy is not yet settled, nor will it be for a generation at least.

**His Philosophy and Style.** — (Richardson, II., 268–280; Stedman, 349–395.) *Leaves of Grass* is Whitman's master work; he spent his life in perfecting it and revising it. He declared that he had omitted nothing; that he was all there; that the book was to be his "*carte de visite* to future generations." Its aim, as its author expressed it, is "to present a complete picture of man in this age;" and if a running catalogue, minutely specific, of every detail and accessory of modern life is what was meant, the book has accomplished its purpose. He has touched upon every subject; he has described everything, and he has omitted nothing in his descriptions. He has filled page after page with enumerations like this:

"Land of wheat, beef, pork! Land of wool and hemp! Land of the potato, the apple, and the grape!

Land of the pastoral plains, the grass fields of the world!

Land of those sweet-aired interminable plateaus! Land there of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of adobe!

Land there of rapt thought and of the realization of the stars! Land of simple, holy, untamed lives!

Lands where the northwest Columbia winds, and where the southwest Colorado winds.

Land of the Chesapeake! Land of the Delaware!

Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan!

Land of the Old Thirteen! Massachusetts land! Land of Vermont and Connecticut."

Many of his longer poems contain no consecutive thought; they wander all over the cosmos and beyond. A long list of the fauna of North America is followed

by a description of the defence of the Alamo; of the capture of the *Serapis* by John Paul Jones; and then by a minute catalogue of New York street-sights. There is nothing that may not be mentioned however gross, no slang of the street which may not be introduced at any place. Here and there are lines that are genuinely poetic:

“The carpenter dresses his plank — the tongue of his foreplane  
whistles its wild ascending lisp.”

Or,

“A child said ‘What is the grass?’ fetching it to me with full  
hands;

How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any  
more than he.”

Or again,

“Press close, bare-bosomed Night! Press close, magnetic, nour-  
ishing Night!

Night of south winds! Night of the few large stars!

Still, nodding night! Mad, naked, summer night.”

But among these gems there are scattered such lines as these:

“Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty  
angels with shirts bagging out at their waists.”

With most persons Whitman is an acquired taste. When one opens *Leaves of Grass* for the first time, he sees little that appears to him like poetry. More familiarity, however, may disclose lines full of a certain grandeur, lines singularly happy in expression, as “where the herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the square miles.” But after they have singled out the

grand lines, have been startled here and there by the singularly realistic touches, and have been thrilled by a few of the sweeping pictures, most readers find their enthusiasm exhausted. The most devoted of Whitman's admirers, like Stedman and Burroughs, caught their first enthusiasm from the lips of the poet himself, but to those who must depend alone upon the poet's printed words, enthusiasm comes less easily. It is certainly true that to the majority of readers *Leaves of Grass* contains a few good things amid a disgusting mass of rubbish.

Whitman is confessedly the poet of the body. His look is not upward. He grovels in the earthy and the disgusting parts of human life and experience. He worships himself,—his body. His egotism is remarkable. "While they discuss," he says, "I am silent, and go bathe and admire myself." "I dote on myself," he cries, "I, Walt Whitman."

"I sat studying at the feet of the great masters.

Now, if eligible, oh that the great masters might return and study me."

All of the great poets of the world have looked away from their disgusting surroundings and fleshly fetters into a world of their creation that was bright and ethereal, but Whitman cries "I am satisfied" with the perishable and the carnal. This alone would debar him from the company of the great masters of song.

**His Democracy.**—One chief reason why Europeans have chosen Whitman as the American laureate is on

account of his extreme democracy. To him all men are equal, and as a corollary to this he added that all functions and parts of man are of equal honor. To many his egotism is only an honest expression of this sense of his equality with all other men. He delighted in the sons of toil, in the great average class, even in the outcast and degraded. As Whittier was near the soil and understood the hearts and lives of the New England peasantry, so Whitman was near the heart of the great metropolis. He has written now and then of nature, but he understood better

“The blab of the pave, the tires of carts, sluff of boot soles, talk  
of promenaders,

The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb,  
the clank of the shod horses on the granite floor.”

He delighted in ferries, and at one time he knew every deck-hand and pilot on the Brooklyn boats. He was for years on terms of closest intimacy with scores of cabmen and teamsters. “They had immense qualities,” he writes, “largely animal,—eating, drinking,—great personal pride, in their way,—perhaps a few slouches here and there, but I should have trusted the general run of them, in their simple good will and honor, under all circumstances. Not only for comradeship, and sometimes affection,—great studies I found them also.” Such practical democracy was new to Europe.

Whitman’s personality is by no means to be gathered from *Leaves of Grass*. That he was a jovial, whole-hearted comrade to all men, one whose soul went out in full to his fellow whatever his station, may be gathered



from every page, but in his life there was nothing egotistic or immoral. Few of our poets have been more thoroughly lovable. Sir Edwin Arnold, who visited him at Camden during Whitman's last years, declares that he passed with him the most delightful day of his life.

**His Lyrics.** — Whitman's truest poetry is outside of *Leaves of Grass*. His *Drum Taps* contains some of the best lyrics inspired by the war. "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," and "Captain, My Captain" (both on the death of Lincoln), "The Man-of-War Bird," and "Come up from the Fields, Father," are among the treasures of American literature. It is a noteworthy fact that in these noble lyrics Whitman abandoned his chant, and wrote in the usual poetic forms. It is these poems that disarm criticism; he who can write a lyric as intense and finished as "Captain, My Captain" is a poet, and a poet too of no ordinary rank.

"O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done;  
 The ship has weathered every rack, the prize we sought is won.  
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.  
     But O heart! heart! heart!  
     O the bleeding drops of red,  
     Where on the deck my captain lies,  
     Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
 Rise up — for you the flag is flung, for you the bugle trills; —  
 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths; for you the shore's  
     a-crowding; —  
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning.

Here Captain! dear father!  
This arm beneath your head;  
It is some dream that on the deck  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;  
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won.

Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells,  
But I, with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck where my captain lies  
Fallen cold and dead."

REQUIRED READING. — "Walt Whitman" (paragraph 206, "I understand the large hearts of heroes," to the end of the frigate fight); "The Ox Tamer," "Mannahatta," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," "Dirge for Two Veterans," "The Man-of-War Bird," "Come up from the Fields, Father."

## XXVII.

### POETS OF THE SOUTH AND WEST.

#### I. THE SOUTH.

THE history of American literature previous to the Civil War must of necessity confine itself closely to the writers and writings of New England and New York. The present period, however, has witnessed a gradual widening of the literary field. The South and the West have been heard from with increasing frequency until now no one region can claim a monopoly of the literary product. The literature of the South, even to the present day, has been small and sporadic. The patriarchal life of the great plantations and the peculiar social system of the southern cities have not been conducive to literary achievement (p. 13). They have developed men of acknowledged genius in almost every other field,—jurists, soldiers, orators, and statesmen; but, aside from Poe, no author of commanding rank. There has been small demand for literature, the leisure class as a rule caring little for reading, and the masses being illiterate.

But even these adverse circumstances have not been able to keep out of sight several true poets. Amid untold discouragements they have sung on; mostly, however, to audiences in the North. "Their lives," says Hayne, "can never be read without bitter pain; the direct results of poverty being but too conspicuous in

the determination of their melancholy fates." The war broke into their lives with its harsh discord; it wrung from their hearts fiery battle lyrics, and it left them in poverty and shattered health to sing sadly of the happy days that for them would never return.

"Forgotten! Tho' a thousand years should pass,  
Methinks our air will throb with memory's thrills,  
A common grief weigh down the faltering grass,  
A pathos shroud the hills;  
Waves roll lamenting; autumn sunsets yearn  
For the old time's return." — *Hayne*.

Of these poets the only ones who merit particular attention are Hayne and Lanier.

### 1. PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830-1886).

"No Southern poet has written so much or done so much to give a literary impulse to his section, so that he well deserves the title that has been bestowed upon him by his English friends as well as by his own people, 'the Laureate of the South.'" — *Margaret J. Preston*.

"His verse displays the wealth and warmth of the landscape of South Carolina and Georgia, the loneliness of the 'pine barrens' where nature seems unmolested, or the swish of the wild Southern sea." — *Richardson*.

**Life** (by Margaret J. Preston, prefixed to the 1882 edition of his poems; see *Literary World*, XIV., 74).

*Poems*. 1855.

*Sonnets and  
Other Poems*.

1857.

*Volio, a Legend  
of the Island of  
Cos*. 1859.

*Legends and  
Lyrics*. 1872.

*The Mountain  
of the Lovers*.

1873.

The city of Charleston, South Carolina, during the decade before the war contained the most brilliant and enthusiastic group of literary workers that has ever gathered in the South. At its head stood the prolific novelist, William Gilmore Simms (p. 51), while about him were

gathered younger writers like Henry Timrod (1829-1867), Paul Hamilton Hayne, and many others whose names are less known to fame. In 1857, the year that witnessed the birth of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the little group dreaming of a distinctively Southern literature, established a literary magazine of the first rank, modelled after *Blackwood's* and published under the name of *Russell's Magazine*. But the South was not ready for a distinctively literary organ, and the magazine died a lingering death even before the outbreak of the war.

Hayne, the most active spirit of this literary movement, was a member of the old South Carolina family that has played such an important part in early American history. He had been reared in a wealthy and cultured home, had been educated at Charleston College, and after a course in the law, had been admitted to the bar of his state. But the law was not to his taste and he abandoned it to devote himself wholly to literary work. His poems, published in Boston in 1855, and his second volume published in Charleston two years later, brought him into wide notice as a poet, and a brilliant career seemed open to him; but the war changed the current of his life. It swept away his property and home, and the hopes and dreams of his young manhood. Literature which had been to him a pastime now became a means of support. He wrote editorials and book notices for various journals, and at one time was editor of a leading Southern paper. His last years were spent amid the Georgia pines, where in sickness and poverty

he wrote his sweetest lyrics, and where he died in 1886, mourned by North and South alike.

**As a Poet.** — Hayne belongs distinctively to the artistic, imaginative school of lyrists. Had he removed to New York, he would without doubt have become one of that select circle whose leaders are now Stedman and Stoddard. His ability as a literary craftsman is shown by his marked success with the sonnet, that unfailing indicator of poetic skill; his true lyric power appears in his songs of the war. He did for the South what Whittier did for the North. The lyrics "My Motherland," "Stonewall Jackson," "The Little White Glove," and above all "Beyond the Potomac," indicate the high-water mark of the Southern poetry of the Rebellion. Hayne also had great success as a narrative poet, ranking in this department only second to Bayard Taylor. Besides poetry he wrote a biographical sketch of his uncle, Robert Y. Hayne (p. 186), and appreciative memoirs of Timrod and Simms.

"Hayne is a knight of chivalry, a troubadour, a minne-singer misplaced and misunderstood, who should have lived ages ago in Provence or some other sunny land. What I admire in him most is his loyalty to his vocation and the conscientiousness with which he gives voice to his poetic impulses whether the world heeds them or not." — *John R. Thompson.*

**REQUIRED READING.** — His best sonnets, "At Last" and "Earth Odors after Rain"; Poems of the war, "Beyond the Potomac," "Our Martyr," "My Motherland," "The Little White Glove," "Stonewall Jackson"; also "MacDonald's Raid," "The Wife of Brittany," "Daphles," "Lyric of Action," "The Dryad of the Pine," "Forecastings," "The Vision at Twilight," "Above the Storm," "Underground," and "Love's Autumn."



## 2. SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881).

"A poet of rare promise, whose original genius was somewhat hampered by his hesitation between two arts of expression, music and verse, and by his effort to co-ordinate them." — *Beers*.

**Life** (by Charles N. West; by W. H. Ward in the 1884 edition of Lanier's *Poems*. See also *Century Magazine*, April, 1864, and *Tiger Lilies*).

Of the little group of poets who sang the heart and hope of the Confederacy, the youngest was Sidney Lanier, of Georgia. Born in 1842, he had scarcely completed his college course when he entered the Southern army to serve through the entire war. He participated in the seven days' fighting before Richmond; served with the signal corps in various parts of the South; was captured while in command of a blockade runner, and served for several months as a prisoner of war, — all of which adventures he recorded in *Tiger Lilies*, a novel written two years after the close of the Rebellion. After a varied career as clerk, academy principal, and lawyer, he became, in 1879, lecturer on English literature in Johns Hopkins University, a position which he held until his death in 1881.

**As a Poet.** — To understand Lanier's work one must appreciate his intense passion for music. In a letter to Hayne he once wrote:

"Whatever turn I may have for art is purely musical, poetry

*Tiger Lilies* (a novel). 1867.

*Poems*. 1877.

*The Boys' Froissart*. 1878.

*The Boys' King Arthur*. 1880.

*The Science of English Verse*. 1880.

*The Boys' Mabinogion*. 1881.

*The Boys' Percy*. 1882.

*The English Novel*. 1883.

being with me a mere tangent into which I shoot sometimes. I could play passably on several instruments before I could write legibly, and since then the very deepest of my life has been filled with music which I have studied and cultivated far more than poetry."

Poetry was to him one of the many varieties of music. In its highest manifestations it could be comprehended only by a few. "In all cases," he declared, "the appeal is to the ear, but the ear should for that purpose be educated up to the highest possible plane of culture." Like Whitman, he protested against the stereotyped verse forms and the traditions of poetic technique. "For the artist in verse," he maintained, "there is no law: the perception and love of beauty constitute the whole outfit." With these notions as to the nature and elements of verse, he set out in all seriousness to compose symphonies in words. By the skilful manipulation of metres and accents, of onomatopœia and alliteration, he sought to make a musical picture, if such a thing can be imagined. The poems "Sunrise," "The Marshes of Glynn," and "Corn" may be taken as the best examples of his methods.

Not all of Lanier's poems are so elaborately wrought. Some are as spontaneous and limpid as bird-songs. Shelley himself never wrote a sweeter stanza than

"Sail on, sail on, fair cousin cloud!  
Oh, loiter hither from the sea!  
Still-eyed and shadow-browed,  
Steal off from yon far-drifting crowd,  
And come and brood upon the marsh with me."

Lanier defended his poetical theories in his *Science of*

*English Verse*, a work full of subtle analysis but of little practical value.

REQUIRED READING. — "Hymns of the Marshes," "The Song of the Chattahoochee," "The Mocking-bird," "The Revenge of Hamish," "The Ship of Earth," "Tampa Robins," and "The Bee."

**The Dialect Poets.** — The leading singers of the South, like Poe and Hayne and Lanier, were poets of culture who represented the higher classes; it remained for STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER (1826-1864), and his followers, like IRWIN RUSSELL (1853-1879), to enter the cabins of the lowly and learn their sorrows and their joys. Few American poems smack more strongly of the soil or are more unquestionably original than Foster's plaintive folk-songs like "The Old Folks at Home," and "My Old Kentucky Home."

## II. THE WEST.

**The Ohio Valley.** — The first half of the Nineteenth Century was in reality the colonial period for the vast extent of territory lying west of the Alleghanies. It was a time of establishing landmarks, of subduing physical obstacles, of experimenting and preparation. It was not until the second half of the century had opened, that the first songs having a distinctively Western quality began to appear in the periodicals of the East. The first movement towards a distinctively Western literature, and indeed the only movement thus far which has been anything but sporadic, came from the Ohio Valley, which, being one of the earliest settled

portions of the West, had acquired a marked individuality. From the Ohio Valley have come the poets Alice and Phœbe Cary, Piatt, Hay, and Riley, and the novelists Eggleston and Howells, all of whom have done much to cast a literary atmosphere over the land of their birth. (See Venable's *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*.)

### 1. JOHN JAMES PIATT (b. 1835).

"His poems are totally unlike the products of the Atlantic coast; they have a racy flavor of their own, and are a positive addition to our national literature." — *Underwood*.

The little volume of youthful verse which was published in 1860, under the title *Poems of Two Friends*,

*Poems of Two Friends*. 1860.

*The Nests at Washington*. 1864.

*Poems in Sunshine and Firelight*. 1866.

*Western Windows*. 1869.

*Landmarks and Other Poems*. 1871.

*Idyls and Lyrics of the Ohio Valley*. 1884.

*At the Holy Well*. 1887.

marks the appearance of the first poetry having a distinctively Western flavor. Its authors, two printing-office employees, soon left the West, Piatt for Washington, where a long and honorable official career awaited him, and Howells for Venice, where he was to pass four years as American Consul. But Piatt never forgot his native fields. From memories of his childhood he drew loving studies of the heart life of his home State until he became the Whittier of the middle West.

"John Piatt, the laureate of prairie and homestead life, has won a just reputation for his reflective and idyllic verse. He has a Wordsworthian sympathy with nature, and knowledge of its forms, and a sincere purpose. He transmits with much simplicity the air and bloom of the prairie, the firelight in the settler's home,

and the human endeavor of the great inland States he knows so well." — *Stedman*.

## 2. JOHN HAY (b. 1838).

John Hay, a native of Indiana, and private secretary to Abraham Lincoln from 1861 until the President's death, published in 1871 a volume of humorous Western ballads that for a time surpassed in popularity even Bret Harte's work in the same field. His "Jim Bludso," "Little Breeches," and "Mystery of Gilgal" gave promise of a poetic career of no ordinary brilliancy, but Hay was content to abandon the field with his first success.

*Pike County  
Ballads.* 1871.  
*Castilian Days.*  
1871.  
*Abraham  
Lincoln*  
(with Nicolay).

His *Castilian Days*, a series of graceful studies of the social life, the romance, and the beauty of Spain, to which country he was Consul during the administration of Johnson, appeared the same year with *Pike County Ballads*. But the crowning work of his life is the ponderous life of Abraham Lincoln, written in conjunction with Nicolay, which ran for two years in the *The Century Magazine*. The work is in reality a minute record of one of the most important periods in American history. Of its ultimate rank it is as yet too early to prophesy, but it is not hazardous to declare it one of the very greatest of American biographies. As a storehouse of facts for the future historian it is of priceless value.

SUGGESTED READING. — "The Cradle and the Grave of Cervantes," from *Castilian Days*.

**Other Western Poets.**—Of the younger school of Western poets only three merit especial attention. WILL CARLETON (b. 1845), a native of Michigan, but of late years a resident of Brooklyn, has achieved a wide popularity with his humorous and pathetic ballads of the home and the farm. EUGENE FIELD (1850–1895), the sprightly humorist and poet, did his most enduring work as a delineator of child life. His “Little Boy Blue,” full of exquisite tenderness and true pathos, is his best poem. Although a native of St. Louis, Field was reared and educated in Massachusetts. From 1883 until the time of his death he was connected with *The Chicago News*, conducting with rare ability the column entitled “Flats and Sharps” which, with mingled satire and wit, waged a fierce warfare against shams of every kind. Among his books may be mentioned *A Little Book of Western Verse* and *Echoes from the Sabine Farm*, a sparkling translation of the Odes of Horace. The youngest of the Ohio Valley school, and in many respects its most promising member, is JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (b. 1854), “the Hoosier Poet,” whose quaint and homely idyls of country life are full of true humor and genuine poetry. Among his volumes may be mentioned *The Old Swimmin’ Hole* (1883), and *Armazinda* (1894).

**The California Poets.**—The discovery of gold in California in 1849, with its attendant excitement and its unprecedented conditions, marks the opening of a picturesque era in American history. The mad rush of all nationalities across the pathless plains, around



the southern cape, across the isthmus; the headlong scramble of the mines; the mining towns that rose as if by magic in every gulch; the lawless miners who appealed to no law save their revolvers,—men who to-day might be fabulously rich, treating the town to champagne in buckets, to-morrow “busted,” and at work with spade and cradle; the rivalry and excitement when a stroke of the pick might make a man a millionaire or the turn of a card reduce him to poverty; the new scenery, almost tropical in its flora, and unprecedented in its proportions, with mammoth plants and trees, great cañons, alkaline plains, and lofty sierras,—all this was highly romantic and bound sooner or later to have its laureate.

### 1. FRANCIS BRET HARTE (b. 1839).

“There remain the democratic poets, among them Bret Harte, Cincinnatus (Joaquin) Miller, and Walt Whitman. All three are poets of the peculiar life of the New World, and not of the features it possesses in common with the Old. Bret Harte is the poet of the red-shirted diggers, Miller of the filibuster chiefs like Walker in Nicaragua, Whitman of the workmen on wharves and farms, in dockyards, factories, and foundries, — of the free strong life of Young America.” — *Stedman*.

The first literary echo from the California mines was in Bayard Taylor's *Eldorado*, and *Rhymes of Travel*, written in the first feverish days of the gold excitement, before the region had gained the peculiar individuality that was to characterize it in later times. The next echo came years later, when a young and

*Condensed  
Novels. 1867.  
East and West  
Poems. 1871.  
Tales of the Ar-  
gonauts. 1875.  
Gabriel Conroy.  
1876.*

*Echoes of the  
Foothills.* 1879.

*The Twins of  
Table Mountain.*  
1879.

*In the Carqui-  
nez Woods.*  
1883.

*Snow-Bound at  
Eagle's.* 1886.

And many  
others.

unknown writer startled the world with his graphic pictures of life in the California gulches with its unprecedented social and moral conditions.

Francis Bret Harte, a native of the State of New York, had gone to California in 1854, in the most picturesque days of the gold excitement. After a varied career as school-teacher, miner, compositor, and editor, he founded in San Francisco, in 1868, *The Overland Monthly*, a purely literary magazine whose spirit was well typified by the vignette upon its title page,—a grizzly bear crossing a railroad track. He had commenced his literary career by contributing to the San Francisco journals several poems of more than ordinary merit, among them “John Burns of Gettysburg,” and “The Pliocene Skull,” and he had published in 1867 his *Condensed Novels*, an amusing series of parodies so cleverly executed as to be actually valuable as literary criticism. It was not, however, until the appearance of “The Luck of Roaring Camp,” in the second number of the *Monthly*, and “The Outcasts of Poker Flat,” in the third number, that he gained more than a local audience; but after the publication of these sketches and others that followed in rapid succession, Harte found himself all at once the most popular of American authors. The British press, which has always insisted that our literature should deal with characters and scenes and principles peculiar exclusively to the New World, at once hailed him as the long-looked-for American laureate. His

countrymen also were unstinted in their praise. When, in 1871, he came to the East, his journey was almost a triumphal procession. The *Atlantic Monthly* offered him ten thousand dollars a year to write exclusively for its pages. In 1878 he was appointed Consul to Crefeld, Germany, but was transferred soon after to Glasgow, where he remained during two administrations. He still resides abroad, where he continues to pour out tales of California life, publishing sometimes as many as three volumes in a year.

**As a Poet.** — During the earlier period of his literary career, when his message to the world was as yet untold and burning within him, Harte as often expressed himself in poetry as in prose, and indeed his first prose sketches in their intensity, their conception, and workmanship are very near to poetry. His poems were innovations as truly original in conception and execution as they were in subject and theme. They are mostly monologues written in the dialect of the mines, full of slang and exclamation. There is little variety. A few stock characters and a few incidents are used over and over again. The wit is sometimes forced and the humor overdrawn. But nevertheless there is in them the indefinable charm of genius. Here and there are lyrics that, judged by any standard, are faultless gems. The beautiful story of "Conception de Arguello" is one of the glories of American literature. What a wealth of poetic description in the lines:

"Week by week the near hills whitened in their dusty leather coats, —

Week by week the far hills darkened from the fringing plain of oaks;

Till the rains came and far-breaking, on the fierce southwester  
tost,  
Dashed the whole long coast with color, and then vanished and  
were lost.  
So each year the seasons shifted: wet and warm and drear and  
dry;  
Half a year of clouds and flowers,—half a year of dust and  
sky."

The best known of all Harte's lyrics is his "Plain Language from Truthful James," better known as "The Heathen Chinee," which was hastily written, like Lowell's "The Courtin'," to fill an unfinished column.

REQUIRED READING.—"Conception de Arguello," "Jim," "To a Pliocene Skull," "In the Tunnel," "John Burns of Gettysburg," "The Heathen Chinee."

As a Prose Writer. — (Richardson, II. See also Haweis' *American Humorists*.) Although from the time of his first sketches in the *Overland Monthly* until the present, Harte has continued to write volume after volume of California tales, the first sketches from his pen mark the highest reach of his literary achievement. Not only were these first creations full of novel scenes and unprecedented characters, but they were works of literary art worthy to be compared with the rarest products of American genius. Their pathos and humor are genuine; their action intensely dramatic; their imaginative power of epic strength. It is hard indeed to find flaws in these accurately cut cameos. Had Harte died in the full flush of his early achieve-

"The Luck of  
Roaring Camp."  
"The Outcasts  
of Poker Flat."  
"Miggles."  
"Tennessee's  
Partner."  
"Brown of  
Calaveras."  
"How Santa  
Claus came to  
Simpson's Bar."

ment, the world would never have done discussing what might have been the ripe fruit when the early windfalls were of such rare quality. But Harte's ripe fruit was of inferior flavor. All that he has written in his later years is simply a recombination again and again of the scenes and characters and incidents of his earlier work, with less art and less enthusiasm and energy.

His canvas is a limited one; his characters are few, and, as in his poetry, his stock incidents and scenes are used over and over again. His tales all point to the same moral,—that in the dregs of men, in gamblers, murderers, drunkards, desperadoes, and outcasts, there are the latent germs of heroes; that the evil in man can never completely drive the good from the heart.

He is pre-eminently a writer of sketches. He excels in painting with a few deft strokes a scene or a character, but he has no sustained power of imagination. He has been called "a short-winded Dickens," and indeed up to a certain point the criticism is a just one. His characters are grotesque; his style sometimes savors of Dickens; he deals with low life; and he uses pathos and humor with rare skill. That he is "short-winded" is seen in the way that he fails miserably with anything longer than a mere sketch. His longer novels, like *Gabriel Conroy* and *The Story of a Mine*, are simply collections of episodes. But the comparison with Dickens fails when we consider his inability to draw character.

"When we have given full credit to the pathos and humor, to the poetic quality of fancy and imagination, then we must stop.

We have about reached the limit of the author's powers. The material for a fully developed character of any single individual is wanting. The action of men as arising from a bundle of motives is not developed at all; we see phases of life, but no complete life. We get a burning moment in a reckless career, an instantaneous photograph, and that is all." — *J. H. Morse.*

REQUIRED READING. — "The Outcasts of Poker Flat;" "How Santa Claus came to Simpson's Bar."

## 2. JOAQUIN MILLER (b. 1841).

"The Oregon Byron."

"His poetry is tropical in its profusion of color, and Eastern in the glowing heat of its impetuous passion." — *Stedman.*

The story of Cincinnatus Hiner Miller reads like one of Harte's tales. He had gone with his father from Indiana to Oregon in his thirteenth year, had worked for a time on a farm, and at the age of sixteen had entered the California mines. Later he went with Walker to Nicaragua, joined a tribe of Indians, becoming at length their sachem, returned to Oregon, and began the study of law. But his legal studies soon tiring him, he for one year filled the hazardous position of express messenger for the gold-mining districts of Idaho, after which he edited for a time a weekly newspaper soon suppressed for disloyalty, and in 1866 he was elected county judge in Eastern Oregon. In 1870 he published his first volume, *Songs of the Sierras*, which attracted immediate attention. Lured by the warm welcome given the book by

*Songs of the Sierras.* 1870.

*Songs of the Sunlands.* 1873.

*Songs of the Desert.*

*Songs of Italy.*

*Songs of the Mexican Seas.*

*The Danites in the Sierras* (prose).

*With Walker in Nicaragua.*

*Shadows of Shasta* (prose).

And others.



the British press, Miller the same year sailed for Europe, where he was received with marked honors by the highest literary society. On his return to America he lived for a time in Washington, but in 1887 he returned to the West, where he has since resided.

**As a Poet.** — Miller's poetry is in many respects what might be expected from one who has had little education save that gained from contact with rough men and wild scenes. He early declared that he cared not a fig for "rith-um and measurement"; he uses adjectives to redundancy; and he echoes on every page his favorite poets, Byron and Swinburne. He attracted attention chiefly on account of the strangeness of his backgrounds and the tropical richness of his imagination. For a time it was believed that he was a Byron in the rough, and that more maturity and culture and a broader horizon would make of him a poet of high rank. But Miller has never risen above his earliest work. His poems have at times a wild, lawless beauty, and their pictures of the deserts, the sierras, and the American tropics, are often thrilling and poetic, but these grains of gold are scattered among a dreary mass of rubbish. Miller stands as a picturesque figure in American literature, and his name will always be mentioned in connection with that of Bret Harte, but the early decline of his fame seems to indicate that he is not a poet of high rank.

REQUIRED READING. — "Arizonian;" "Californian."

## XXVIII.

### WOMAN IN LITERATURE.

DURING the period since the Civil War no literary movement has been more marked or significant than the great advancement made by woman. It is now seen clearly that woman has found her complete emancipation first in the world of letters. Her literary wares now compete for the same market as those of men, and command equal respect and equal compensation.

The province occupied by woman is not a broad one. Almost without exception she has confined herself to two forms of literary expression: the lyric poem and the short sketch or novel of domestic life. As a poet she has dealt largely with subjective subjects. Her poems are mostly the songs of moods; of joys and sorrows; of aspirations and fears; of impressions made by objects of beauty. Since nearly all the women poets have sung in the same key, voicing the same typical moods and experiences, the result has been to some degree monotonous. While many have sung well, few have stood out pre-eminent. Many a strong voice that in the early days would have commanded wide attention is now lost in the swelling harmony of the great chorus.

## I. POETRY.

## 1. ALICE CARY (1820-1871).

Perhaps the earliest singer of the Ohio Valley, though she bore no distinctively Western message, was Alice Cary of Cincinnati, whose first volume of poems appeared in 1850. The story of her girlhood has in it much to remind one of the early struggles of Whittier. The daughter of a humble home, she had been deprived of education and culture, but with her sister Phoebe, whose life became almost a part of her own, she had toiled blindly on. She found at length a warm friend in Whittier, by whose advice she printed her first volume, and thus championed, she soon gained such general praise that in 1851 she removed to New York City, where she was hailed as "the Jean Ingelow of America." Here she passed the rest of her life. During her last years her modest home in Twentieth Street became the frequent meeting-place of the purest and best circles of literary New York.

Alice Cary's poems are colorless and passionless. They have little spontaneity or large creative power. Everywhere in them one finds the hackneyed epithets and phrases, the sing-song rhythm, and the sentimental pictures of the period in which they were written. Their charm consists in their sweet femininity and their rare delicacy and simplicity. With a certain large class of readers these poems have a perennial charm.

*Poems of Alice and Phoebe Cary.* 1850.

*Clovernook.* 1851.

*Hollywood (a novel).* 1855.

*Married, not Mated.* 1856.

*Pictures of Country Life.* 1859.

*Lyrics and Hymns.* 1866.

*Snowberries.* 1869.

And others.

Perhaps her best claim to remembrance is her *Clover-nook*, a series of prose studies of her early Ohio home. "They bear," said Whittier, "the true stamp of genius, — simple, natural, truthful, — and evince a keen sense of the humor and pathos, of the comedy and tragedy, of life in the country."

Among her poems may be mentioned "Pictures of Memory," praised by Poe, "The Gray Swan," "The Picture Book," and "Our Schoolmaster." Phœbe Cary's "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" has become one of the most popular of American hymns. (See Whittier's "The Singer"; also *Memorial of Alice and Phoebe Cary*, Mary Clemmer Ames.)

## 2. LUCY LARCOM (1826–1893).

Like the Cary sisters and many other women who won literary recognition during the middle years of the century, Lucy Larcom came from humble life. For several years she was a mill girl in Lowell, Massachusetts, and her first knowledge of poetry was gained from books and clippings studied at odd moments amid the clashing of the looms. At length she became a school-teacher, and finally editor for a time of *Our Young Folks*. Like the Cary sisters, she early received encouragement from Whittier. Her little poem, "Hannah Binding Shoes," first brought her into notice, and her ringing patriotic songs during the Civil War gave her a wide audience. Her poems, like those of Alice Cary,

*Ships in the  
Mist.* 1859.

*Wild Roses of  
Cape Ann.*

*Childhood  
Songs.*

*A New England  
Girlhood.*

*At the Beautiful  
Gate.*

*As It is in  
Heaven.*

And others.

are still remembered not for their commanding power, but for their womanly sweetness and purity. She was at her best in pictures of the mountains and the sea, and in her later religious poems. (See *Lucy Larcom's Life, Letters, and Diary*, D. L. Addison.)

SUGGESTED READING. — "Hannah Binding Shoes"; *A New England Girlhood, Outlined from Memory*. See also her Sonnets: "Clouds on Whiteface," "Chocorua," and "Black Mountain in Bearcamp Lake."

### 3. HELEN HUNT JACKSON (1831-1885).

Her "name outranked, at the time of her death, that of any other American woman who ever claimed the name of poet. Mrs. Jackson had the characteristics of the *Dial* group at its best: deep and sincere thought, uttered for its own sake in verse not untinged by the poetic inspiration and touch." — *Richardson*.

The life of Helen Hunt Jackson was full of deep contrasts. The daughter of a New England college professor, Nathan W. Fiske of Amherst, she passed a happy childhood, and was given every opportunity for acquiring an education. At the age of twenty-one she married Captain E. B. Hunt, a brilliant military engineer, and for eleven years she lived with him in almost perfect happiness. But in 1865 her husband was killed while experimenting with a submarine battery, and her two children, her mother, and her father died shortly afterwards.

After the first awful bitterness of her grief she turned to poetry for consolation. Her first work was an outpouring of her personal suffering.

*Verses by H. H.*  
1870.

*Bits of Travel.*  
1872.

*Bits of Talk  
about Home  
Matters.* 1876.

*Bits of Travel  
at Home.* 1878.

*A Century of  
Dishonor.* 1881.

*Ramona.* 1884.

*Zeph.* 1885.

*Between-Whiles.*  
1887.

And others.

“Low, still, unutterably weak,  
In human helplessness more helpless than  
The smallest of God’s other creatures can  
Be left, I lie and do not speak.  
Walls rise and close  
Around. No warning shows  
To me, who am but blind, which wall  
Will shelter and which one will fall  
And crush me in the dust,  
Not that I sinned, but that it must.  
Each hour within my heart some sweet hope dies.”

The burden of her cry was “I am blind.” But resignation came at length and her songs, though always subjective and intense, became less like cries of grief. Her first volume of poems, *Verses by H. H.*, appeared in 1870. She had already found an enthusiastic friend in Emerson. “The poems of a lady,” he had declared, “who contents herself with the initials ‘H. H.’ have rare merit of thought and expression.” Thus heralded by Emerson, the volume won immediate success. Lyrics like “Spinning” and “My Legacy” became widely popular, while the deeper tones of “Thought,” “Joy,” “Resurgam,” “Burnt Ships,” “Gondolieds,” and “My Strawberry” satisfied even the most critical.

As a poet Mrs. Jackson’s range was not a wide one, but within her limits she sang surpassingly well. She was not a creator; she simply read her own heart. The awfulness of her affliction cut her off for a time from the world, and like a great storm it cleared the atmosphere about her so that she looked far into the mysteries that encompass mortal life. It was her raptness, her mysticism, that appealed so strongly to



Emerson. An intensity of feeling and expression characterizes all of her lyrics. Some of her conceits are almost startling in their vividness and originality, as, for instance, the lines in "Resurgam" commencing,

"Somewhere on earth,  
Marked, sealed, mine from its hour of birth,  
There lies a shining stone,  
My own."

Mrs. Jackson ranks with the four or five Americans who have succeeded with the sonnet. Nearly half of her poems are written in this difficult measure. The best are, perhaps, "Mazzini," "Thought," and "The Zone of Calms."

REQUIRED READING. — "Resurgam," "Spinning," "My Legacy," "Joy," "Gondolieds," "My Bees," "Mazzini," and "Thought."

**Her Prose.** — After the first outburst of song Mrs. Jackson's Muse gradually became silent. Her first prose work, *Bits of Travel*, a collection of her letters from foreign lands, appeared in 1872. Shortly afterwards, to recruit her shattered health, she went to Colorado, where in 1875 she was married to Mr. W. S. Jackson of Colorado Springs. In her next book she poured out in prose her delight in the grand scenery and the intoxicating air of her new home. She became interested in the Indians, and in 1881 published *A Century of Dishonor*, an exhaustive study of the history of several of the tribes, full of her burning indignation at the uniform treachery and cruelty of the United States government. Two years later she was made

special commissioner to examine the condition of the Mission Indians of California. The literary fruit of this mission appeared one year later in *Ramona*, a work pronounced by A. W. Tourgée as "unquestionably the best novel yet produced by an American woman." Mrs. Jackson intended that it should be the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Indian. She put into it all of her intense earnestness and all of the best fruitage of her literary experience. She succeeded in producing a matchless work of art, but she was unable to impart to her readers that sense of reality and that potent thrill which made of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* a living influence.

It is "the story of two decaying civilizations seen in the light of a fresher and stronger social, political, and religious development which tramples them ruthlessly, because unconsciously, into the dust of a new but half-appreciated realm. Hitherto fiction had treated California only as the seat of a new civilization. It had been delineated as the gold-digger's paradise, the adventurer's Eden, the speculator's El Dorado. *Ramona* pictures it as the Indian's lost inheritance and the Spaniard's desolated home." — A. W. Tourgée.

REQUIRED READING. — *Ramona*.

#### 4. CELIA THAXTER (1835–1894).

"While White's *Selborne*, and the pictures of Berwick, and Thoreau's *Walden*, and the *Autobiography of Richard Jefferies* endure, so long will *Among the Isles of Shoals* hold its place with all lovers of nature." — Mrs. Fields.

Celia Thaxter, much of whose life was passed at Appledore on the Isles of Shoals, caught more completely than has any other American poet, not even excepting Longfellow,

*Poems*. 1871.

*Among the Isles of Shoals*

(prose). 1873.

the echoes and odors of the Northern ocean. The sea had been her companion from childhood. Her father, disappointed in some political ambition, resolved to withdraw forever from the mainland, and took his family to one of the rocky isles off the New Hampshire coast, where, as keeper of a light, he passed the rest of his life. In *Among the Isles of Shoals*, one of the most charming studies of the ocean and its phenomena in the language, Mrs. Thaxter has described the "unfolding of her own nature under influences of sky, and sea, and solitude, and untrammelled freedom." She became an eager student of nature—of the driftweed, of the wild flowers of the rocks, of the birds of every variety that dashed themselves to death against the light. When Philip Thaxter, a man of education and culture, who had gone as a missionary to the fishermen of Star Island, came to her in her early womanhood, he brought a new world, new ambitions and dreams. After their marriage, she went with him to the mainland, to return only at intervals to her loved islands; but though she enjoyed her new life to the utmost, the murmur of the ocean was ever in her ears. Her first poem, "Landlocked," full of longings for "the level line of solemn sea," was accepted by Lowell and printed in the seventh volume of the *Atlantic*, and from this time until her death few volumes of the magazine were without contributions from her pen. The last stanzas of "Landlocked" breathe the spirit of all her later poems of the sea.

*Driftweed.*  
1878.

*Poems for  
Children.*  
1884.

*The Cruise of  
the Mystery.*  
1886.

"I dream

Deliciously how twilight falls to-night  
Over the glimmering water, how the light  
Dies blissfully away, until I seem

"To feel the wind, sea-scented, on my cheek,  
To catch the sound of dusky, flapping sail,  
And dip of oars, and voices on the gale  
Afar off, calling low, — my name they speak!

"O Earth! thy summer song of joy may soar  
Ringing to heaven in triumph. I but crave  
The sad caressing murmur of the wave  
That breaks in tender music on the shore."

"All of the pictures over which I dream," she declared, "are set in this framework of the sea." One finds in her work the ocean in its every mood, — the long winter gales "when one goes to sleep in the muffled roar of the storm and wakes to find it still raging in senseless fury"; "the flitting of the coasters to and fro, the visits of the sea fowl, sunrise and sunset, the changing moon, the northern lights, the constellations that wheel in splendor through the winter night"; "the vast weltering desolation of the sea." (See *Letters of Celia Thaxter*.)

REQUIRED READING. — *Among the Isles of Shoals*; "The Sand-piper," "The Watch of Boon Island," "The Spaniards' Graves," "The Wreck of the Pocahontas," "The Summer's Day," and "Before Sunrise."

**Other Poets.** — It is hard indeed to choose from the great throng of sweet singers that have made musical the years since the war, the few who deserve extended praise or passing mention. Of necessity the list must be limited to a few typical names. MARGARET PRESTON

(b. 1825), the leading poetess of the South, has written many vigorous poems and sketches. Her *Beechen Brook* (1886) contains her two strongest lyrics: "Stonewall Jackson's Grave" and "Slain in Battle."

SARAH MORGAN PIATT (b. 1836) wife of John James Piatt, is by far the most eminent female poet of the West. Her lyrics are thoughtful and intense. Stedman credits her with "traits resembling those of Miss Rossetti, — a vivid consciousness of the mystery of life and death." Among her volumes are *A Woman's Poems* (1871), *A Voyage to the Fortunate Isles* (1874), *That New World, and Other Poems* (1876), *In Primrose Time* (1886), and several charming volumes of poems for children.

NORA PERRY (1841–1893) is chiefly remembered from her popular poem "After the Ball."

EMMA LAZARUS (1849–1887), a Jewess of New York City, wrote many intense and passionate lyrics, besides several notable essays and translations. Her best-known book is *Songs of a Semite* (1882). Her strongest poems are "In Exile," "The Crowing of the Red Cock," and "The Banner of the Jew." EDITH MATILDA THOMAS (b. 1854), a native of the Ohio Valley, is by far the most promising of the younger female poets of the West. She is best known from her work in *Lyrics and Sonnets* (1887).

## II. FICTION.

It is in the direction of prose fiction, however, that woman has made her greatest advance. Magazines and periodicals now contain an increasingly large amount

of this work from her pen. As in her poetry, she has not often displayed large creative genius nor shown an ability to deal with the great problems of life. She has, on the whole, succeeded best with the novel of domestic life, and with short character studies thrown on a background with which she is perfectly familiar.

### 1. HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD (b. 1835).

“Her writings manifest a supreme sense of beauty, a revelling delight in color, in music, and all the luxuries of sense.” — *Underwood*.

Few literary careers have opened more splendidly than that of Harriet Prescott Spofford. With a single sparkling story, “In a Cellar,” published in the third volume of the *Atlantic*, she rose at once from obscurity to a place among the best writers of her day. After the publication of *Sir Rohan's Ghost*, a sombre novel full of brilliant description, and *The Amber Gods*, a collection of her best magazine tales, it was confidently predicted that she was to become the leading female novelist of America. But her later work has not fulfilled the promise of her early days.

At her best, as she is in the tales in *The Amber Gods*, Mrs. Spofford reveals a vividness of conception and a delicacy of touch which lose nothing when compared even with the most exquisite creations of French art. A romantic, voluptuous Eastern odor, rare indeed in the work of American novelists, breathes from every page. Nothing in her later work can compare with

*Sir Rohan's  
Ghost.* 1859.

*The Amber  
Gods.* 1863.

*Azarian.* 1864.

*New England  
Legends.* 1871.

*Poems.* 1882.

And others.



the sparkle and freshness of this first vintage, save, perhaps, a few of her later poems. Lyrics like "O Soft Spring Airs," "In Summer Nights," and "Under the Breath," are full of a pensive, dreamy beauty. The American poets are few who could have penned the lines :

"And in the covert of their odorous depths  
The robins shake their wild, wet wings, and flood  
The shallow shores of dawn with music."

SUGGESTED READING. — *The Amber Gods.*

## 2. ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD (b. 1844).

In marked contrast with the Cary sisters, Lucy Larcom, and many other women who, without literary traditions, have won success amid untold discouragements, stands Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, who, like Emerson and Holmes and Lowell, can trace her lineage in a long line of scholarly ancestors. Her father, the Rev. Austin Phelps, a man of great scholarship and power, was for many years the leading professor in Andover Theological Seminary. Her mother, a daughter of Professor Moses Stuart of Andover, was a novelist of great promise, her *Sunny Side*, a pleasing story of country parsonage life, selling 100,000 copies in one year. The daughter of this literary household grew up with every advantage. She had scarcely finished her school-days when her sketches began to appear in the leading

*Gates Ajar.*

1868.

*The Silent*

*Partner.* 1870.

*The Story of*  
*Avis,* 1877.

*An Old Maid's*  
*Paradise.* 1879.

*Friends, a Duet.*  
1881.

*Songs of the*  
*Silent World.*  
1884.

*Dr. Zay.* 1884.

*Jack the Fisherman.* 1887.

*A Strange Life.*  
1895.

And others.

magazines, and when she was twenty-four her *The Gates Ajar*, which went through twenty editions in one year, had given her a widespread literary fame. From that time to the present she has written on an average one volume a year. Her work has constantly improved in quality, her latest novel, *A Singular Life*, being the strongest and most finished work from her pen.

**The Gates Ajar**, Miss Phelps' first significant work, was a notable book even aside from its wonderful popularity. It was something new in American literature and American theology. It attempted to win the secrets of the grave; to solve the problem of the unseen in terms of the seen. It is not a novel, it is rather a series of essays, intense almost to incoherency, bound by a slight thread of story. Its theology has been sharply debated, and its intensity and minute introspection have been criticised; but it was a book, nevertheless, that supplied a need. It gave an answer to thousands who had questioned in vain at the cold shrines of orthodoxy, and it brought to them their first real ray of hope.

After *The Gates Ajar*, the most earnest and intense of Miss Phelps' novels is, without doubt, *The Story of Avis*, a minute and impassioned study of the innermost recesses of a woman's soul.

**Studies of New England Life.** — But the greater part of Miss Phelps' work has been the sketching with intense colors, on a New England background, of exquisite miniatures over a thinly concealed moral. She is one of the leading figures in the little group of

women that has done in prose for New England humble life what Whittier did in verse. Few literary fields have been worked with more painstaking care or with richer results. Mrs. Stowe (p. 334), with her irresistible sketches of Yankee character, is the leader of the group. Among its other members are ROSE TERRY COOKE (1827-1892), who has caught as no one else has the grim humor underlying New England life and character; JANE G. AUSTIN (1831-1894), whose faithful studies of early colonial days are a real addition to American literature (p. 18); Sarah Orne Jewett, who merits a more extended notice; and MARY E. WILKINS, whose accurate characterizations have made her one of the most promising of the younger school of writers. Nearly all of these are at their best in short sketches, — "thumb-nail studies" of life and character. In this field they have created some of the most original and valuable work that has been added of late years to our literature.

No one of the group has written stronger or more finished work than Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. She excels in studies of humble life in the fishing villages of Massachusetts. *Jack the Fisherman* and *The Madonna of the Tubs* are prose idyls which are well-nigh faultless in conception and execution. All of her work is intense and earnest. Many of her books are sermons against intemperance and kindred evils. That she is extravagant at times in her rhetoric, and too emotional and strained in some of her pictures, can be overlooked in view of the spontaneousness of

her message, and the strength and delicacy of her literary art.

In 1889 Miss Phelps became the wife of Herbert D. Ward, a son of the editor of *The Independent*, and, in collaboration with her husband, she has produced several novels dealing with Biblical scenes and characters. But as these are manifestly inferior works, she has of late returned to her former literary domain. (See Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*.)

REQUIRED READING. — *Jack the Fisherman*; *The Story of Avis*.

### 3. SARAH ORNE JEWETT (b. 1849).

"Sarah O. Jewett portrays the ancient, decadent, respectable, gentle, and winsome seaboard town, and tells of the life therein." — *Richardson*.

The novelist of the northern New England coast, as Celia Thaxter is its poet, is Sarah Orne Jewett of

<p><i>Decphaven</i>. 1877. <i>Country By- Ways</i>. 1881. <i>The Mate of the Daylight</i>. 1883. <i>A Country Doc- tor</i>. 1884. <i>A Marsh Island</i>. 1885. <i>A White Heron</i>. 1886. <i>A Native of Winby</i>. 1894. And others.</p>	<p>South Berwick, Maine, a little country village not far from the Isles of Shoals. All of that interesting region about Portsmouth, and Kittery, and York, with its odors of the ocean, its traditions of better days, its historic family mansions fast going to decay, and its peculiar types of character, Miss Jewett knows by heart. She has traversed it in every part, and studied faithfully all of its types and characteristics. Her father, a physician of more than local fame, from her childhood had taken her with</p>
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him on his professional rounds, often beguiling the time with tales of family history, anecdotes of his practice, and characterizations of the peculiar people that he had met during his long experience as a country doctor. The impressionable young novelist could have had no better training for her future work. Her first tales of village life, contributed to the leading magazines, won for her at once an appreciative audience which has steadily increased until the present day.

Miss Jewett, like most of her school of writers, is at her best in the short sketch of life and character. Her plots are slight; she is seldom analytic; she deals more with individual peculiarities than with the universal experiences of life, but in the portrayal of these individuals and their peculiar surroundings, she shows a wonderful power. Her delicate humor, her mastery of dialogue, her simple, limpid style which has been compared even to Hawthorne's, and her fidelity to nature combine to give her work a peculiar strength and charm. Her sketches are as minute in detail and as graphic in treatment as Flemish pictures. Every feature of the Kittery coast—rock, headland, tree, river, and country village—stands out clear and sharp, while her characters seem to live and breathe before us. The readers of her sketches are few who will not agree with James Russell Lowell, that “Nothing more pleasingly characteristic of rural life in New England has been written.”

SUGGESTED READING.—*A White Heron*; *A Country Doctor*.

## 4. MARY NOAILLES MURFREE (b. 1850).

"We could ill spare Miss Murfree's contribution to fiction. It is racy of the soil. The most exacting among our British censors will not venture to deny to her books the right to the distinctive epithet, American." — *Vedder*.

What Miss Jewett and others of her school have done for New England rural life, has been done by scattered

*In the Tennessee Mountains.* 1884.

*Down the Ravine.* 1885.

*The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains.* 1885.

*In the Clouds.* 1886.

*The Story of Keedon Bluffs.* 1887.

*The Despot of Broomsedge Cove.* 1888.

*In the Stranger People's Country.* 1891.

writers for other sections. MARY HALLOCK FOOTE (b. 1847) has portrayed life in the mountains and mines of Colorado and Idaho; ALICE FRENCH, "Octave Thanet," has made the world familiar with the canebrakes of Arkansas, while Mary N. Murfree has made classic ground of the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.

Miss Murfree's first sketch, "The Dancin' Party at Harrison's Cove," by Charles Egbert Craddock, which appeared in the May number of the *Atlantic* of 1878, aroused great interest in literary circles. It was as new in scene and treatment as were Bret Harte's early sketches of the California mines, and it was by a new writer. Other sketches appeared from time to time, and in 1884 their author, of whom the public knew little save that his name was Charles Egbert Craddock and that his address was St. Louis, gathered eight of these sketches into a volume under the title *In the Tennessee Mountains*, which was immediately hailed both at home and abroad as something new in litera-



ture, the work of an author of brilliant promise. The story of the appearance of Charles Egbert Craddock at the *Atlantic* office one year later in the person of Miss Mary N. Murfree, of the incredulity of the editors, and of the sensation that their story caused in the reading world need not be dwelt upon. During the same year Miss Murfree published the powerful story of *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains*, which at once gave her a secure place among English writers of fiction.

The elements of Miss Murfree's success are not hard to discover. Like Bret Harte, she was the pioneer in her literary field. Her scenes are new, and her treatment of them is bold and original. Her backgrounds are vast and chaotic; her characters are picturesque and elemental. She is perfectly familiar with her ground. She knows the recesses of the Tennessee mountains as Miss Jewett knows her native Berwick or as Miss Phelps knows the by-ways of Gloucester. She is not strong in her plots; she is far below Miss Jewett in her manipulation of dialogue and her use of humor, but she has the true novelist's insight and imagination. Under her pen the rough mountains and mountaineers are transfigured. We see them as through a Claude Lorrain glass. No writer has painted such wonderful pen pictures of the varying phenomena of mountains. She has a genius for description. Beneath her hand her mountains stand out clear and sharp like paintings. In all their moods by day and night, in the dazzling lights of winter, and in the mellow glow of autumn they stand displayed upon her canvas,—a rare cabi-

net of pictures such as few authors of any land can show.

Except in one novel, *Where the Battle was Fought*, a production inferior to her other work, Miss Murfree has devoted all her powers to this one field. Her realm is a small one, but within its limits she will always rule supreme. (See Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*.)

SUGGESTED READING.—*In the Tennessee Mountains; The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains.*

### 5. FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT (b. 1849).

To have written a successful juvenile is surely a literary achievement of note. Many have entered this difficult field, but only a few have left it with distinction. MRS. CHILD (1802–1880), that charming writer “with the head of a woman and the heart of a child,” and her contemporary, JACOB ABBOTT (1803–1879), with his Rollo Books and numerous other juveniles, were the first to win unqualified success with stories for children. MRS. A. D. T. WHITNEY (b. 1824), with her *Faith Gartney's Girlhood* and *A Summer in Leslie Goldthwaite's Life*, has written stories which charm old and young alike; and Miss ALCOTT, the leader of American juvenile writers, has produced works which are classics in their field (p. 229).

But of all juveniles the one, perhaps, most widely known is *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, which first appeared in 1886 in the columns of *St. Nicholas*. Before its publication Mrs. Burnett had been widely known as

*That Lass o' Lowrie's.* 1887.  
*A Fair Barbarian.* 1880.  
*Through One Administration.* 1883.  
*Little Lord Fauntleroy.* 1886.  
 And others.

the author of *That Lass o' Lowrie's*, a powerful tale of life in her native Lancashire, England. This she had followed by several tales of American life, none of them, however, equal to her first work, but with the publication of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* her name became at once a household word both in America and England, and it is perhaps in connection with this work that she will be longest remembered.

The charm of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* is due more to the perfection and sweetness of its style than to its truth to life. Such a faultless creature as Fauntleroy is clearly impossible, and yet with such art, with such simplicity and freshness has he been handled, that he delights old and young. There is no doubt that he is a real addition to the list of original characters which America has added to the gallery of fiction.

**Other Writers.** — Among the great number of other female novelists may be mentioned REBECCA HARDING DAVIS (b. 1831), whose *Life in the Iron Mills* and *Waiting for the Verdict* were popular in their day; LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON (b. 1835), who has succeeded in both prose and verse; BLANCHE WILLIS HOWARD (b. 1847), whose sparkling novels *One Summer* and *Guenn* have not lost their first popularity; MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD (b. 1847), whose powerful stories of the period covered by Parkman give no uncertain promise; and MARGARET DELAND, whose graceful verse in *The Old Garden*, and her strong novels *John Ward*, *Preacher*, and *Sidney* have already given her a secure place among American authors.

## XXIX.

### THE LATER NOVELISTS.

**The Flood of Novels.** — The literary historian of a century hence may find that the years since the war — a period that to contemporary eyes seems like a chaos of diffusive tendencies — were in reality the era of prose fiction. The magnitude of the flood of novels and tales that now surges through newspaper and magazine, and in bound form sweeps other literary products from the book-stands, almost exceeds belief. The novel in its various forms is now the chief literary diet of the American people.

The causes of this great activity will be more apparent to the historian with a longer perspective, yet they are not wholly hidden from the contemporary critic. Says Stedman :

The elder poets “fully met the need for idyllic verse, relating to home, patriotism, religion, and the work-day life of an orderly people. They did not scrutinize and vividly present the coils of individual feeling. Our people have outgrown their juvenescence, tested their manhood, and now demand a lustier regimen. They crave the sensations of mature and cosmopolitan experience, and are bent upon what we are told is the proper study of mankind. The rise of our novelists was the answer to this craving. They depict life as it is, though rarely, as yet, in its intenser phases.” — *Poets of America.*

Aside from its abundance, the most surprising thing about the later fiction is its level excellence. The standard has been high, and writers have been obliged to attain to it or not be heard at all; and yet in spite of this, the period has been one of minor novelists. It has not produced one writer who can even approximate to the stature of Poe and Hawthorne.

**The Short Story.** — The fiction of the period has been marked by two important characteristics,—a predominance of the literary form known as the short story, and an increasing tendency toward “realism.” The short story is no new thing in American literature,—Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe all used it to perfection,—but it is only of late years that it has become recognized as a distinct branch of literary expression. Few literary forms require more artistic skill in their production. “Power of invention,” says Vedder, “fertility of imagination, and facility of style are indispensable, but the first requisites are sense of proportion and lucidity of vision. In the short story there must be no fumbling with a purpose, no hazy observation, no indecisive movement; all must be sure, well-devised, clean-cut.” To say that Americans lead the world in this difficult literary domain is to make no idle boast. The French alone have produced work worthy of comparison. The short story in America arose from a distinct demand. The busy, active “Yankee,” who keeps in motion our vast business concerns, has little leisure for the two-volume novel, and he demands for his amusement the humorous, sparkling prose sketch

that may be read without effort and be finished at a sitting.

**Realism.** — Perhaps the most marked literary characteristic of the period, both at home and abroad, has been the rise of a school of novelists, who, following the lead of the French Zola and the Russian Tolstoï, have insisted upon real rather than idealized pictures of life. The American branch of this school, under the lead of James and Howells, insists that the stories have all been told, and that even if this were not so, the novel with a plot, a hero, and a culminating tragedy is untrue to nature. To this school a novel is simply a photograph of life, a mirror held up to nature without comment or explanation. "A novel," says Howells, "is a picture in which the truth to life is suffered to do its unsermonized office for conduct." It should deal with ordinary people and ordinary events and scenes. It should analyze character with minuteness, sketch peculiar types with photographic accuracy, refrain from comment upon its characters, and avoid all situations and endings not absolutely true to life. The realistic novelist does not idealize his characters; he does not enter that ideal world of which we dream in our loftiest moods; he refuses to throw upon life "the light that never was on sea or land"; he deals only with the actual, the tangible, the earthy. All great poets and romancers have been realists to the extent that their pictures have been true to nature; but they have seen the ideal in the real, and this the new school refuses to do. Whittier's *Snow Bound* and Howells' *A Modern*



*Instance* both present perfect pictures of the Northern winter, but Whittier's work not only reveals the mere externals, it shows, as well, the heart and soul of the ideal New England; while Howells describes, with photographic coldness, only that which actually passes before his eyes.

The novelists of the period may be divided into three groups: the Realists, the Novelists of the Soil, and the Romantic Novelists.

### I. THE REALISTS.

#### 1. WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (b. 1837).

**Life.** — (See Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*. The chief authorities on the life and aims of W. D. Howells are his own writings. Few authors have written autobiography more delightful. His *A Boy's Town*, *My Year in a Log Cabin*, and *My Literary Passions* tell in detail the story of his early years. His frequent autobiographical sketches published in the leading magazines record later experiences, while his essays in "The Editor's Study," the best of which have been published in a volume entitled *Criticism and Fiction*, give an accurate account of his literary ideals. His *A Boy's Town* stands near the head of a notable list of similar books, like Aldrich's *Story of a Bad Boy*, Warner's *Being a Boy*, Hale's *A New England Boyhood*, and Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer*.)

W. D. Howells, the most noted author that the Ohio Valley and the West have contributed to American literature, was born in Martin's Ferry, Ohio, March 1,

1837. His early education was gained to a large degree in his father's printing office, where he learned to set type at an early age, and where he was constantly employed until his fourteenth year, when a reverse of fortune compelled the family to seek other fields. For a year they lived in a log cabin, but the young printer soon afterwards found employment as a compositor on *The Columbus State Journal*, and at the age of twenty-two he left the case to become news editor of *The Cincinnati Gazette*. He had already begun his purely literary labors. His poem "By the Dead" had been accepted by Lowell and printed in the fifth number of the *Atlantic*. In 1860 he published with Piatt his maiden volume (p. 392), and during the same year issued a campaign life of Lincoln which, since it secured for him the appointment to the Consulship at Venice, may be considered the turning-point of his life.

**Consul at Venice (1861-1865).**—Howells was in Europe four years, making his home in the romantic old city of Venice, whence he made frequent excursions into other parts of Italy. The years were of priceless value to the young author. He not only mastered the Italian language, and became familiar with the beauties of Italian literature and art, but with his frequent letters to American journals he laid the foundations of a lucid and flexible prose style. *Venetian Life*, a collection of these letters, which appeared in London in 1866, and *Italian Journeys* which

*Venetian Life.*  
1866.

*Italian Journeys.* 1867.

*Tuscan Cities.*  
1885.

*Modern Italian Poets.* 1887.

followed it, are worthy of a place beside Taylor's *Views Afoot* and other classics in the same field. Full of life and grace and the boundless enthusiasm of youth, these books have lost little of their early popularity.

**Editor of the Atlantic (1872-1881).**—Upon his return from Venice, Howells was engaged for a time as writer for various New York journals, but in 1866 he was made assistant editor of the *Atlantic*, with which magazine he was connected for the next fifteen years. *Suburban Sketches*, which, since it is in the same vein as his early work, might have been called "Cambridge Life," appeared in 1868. Howells had found the secret of his strength. He could look upon life and society as Thoreau looked upon external nature and see what most observers overlooked; he could describe with minuteness and accuracy; he was master of a rare vein of playful humor combined with poetic fancy as delicate almost as Irving's, and he had acquired a pure and graceful prose style. High imaginative power, a wide horizon, and broad constructive ability had been denied him.

**As a Novelist.**—Fully realizing the breadth and the limitation of his powers, Howells now started upon the work of his life. His first novel, *Their Wedding Journey* (1871), which recounts with minuteness the incidents of a summer tour to Niagara, has only a slender thread of story. The secret of its strength and charm lies in the presence of those very elements that made *Venetian Life* a classic, a statement which is true in a varying

*A Foregone Conclusion.*  
1874.

*The Undiscovered Country.* 1880.

*A Modern Instance.* 1883

*The Rise of Silas Lapham.*  
1885.

*Indian Summer.* 1886.

*April Hopes.*  
1887.

*A Hazard of  
New Fortunes.*  
1891.

*The World of  
Chance.* 1891.

*The Coast of  
Bohemia.* 1893.

*A Traveller  
from Altruria.*  
1894.

Many others.

degree of all the author's later work. He depends not on manipulation of plot and rush of incident, but upon refinement of style, skilful elaboration, and minuteness and accuracy of detail. Howells' theory of realism can best be learned from his volume, *Criticism and Fiction*. To him realism does not mean a grovelling in the sensual and disgusting; it rather means a faithful description of life as it is really lived by the majority of mankind, full of commonplace even trivial experiences, and seldom or never rising to the heroic and the sublime. Stripped of their charm of style, their accuracy of characterization, and their abundant humor, his novels would at once become insufferable, but with these qualities they are among the most charming creations in our literature.

The lightness of Howells' touch, his genuine wit, and his mastery of dialogue appear at their best in his little parlor comedies like "The Mouse Trap," "The Garroters," and "The Elevator." Nothing so good in their line is to be found in American literature. Had he written nothing else he would still be remembered as the laureate of the trivial, who with exquisite prose style and sparkling humor made classics from the ordinary experiences of human life.

REQUIRED READING. — *Venetian Life*; "Realism and Pseudo-Realism in Literature," and "The American Short Story" in *Criticism and Fiction*; also *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and "The Elevator."

## 2. HENRY JAMES (b. 1843).

“He looks at America with the eyes of a foreigner and at Europe with the eyes of an American.” — *Beers*.

The founder of the realistic school in America and its best known representative at the present time is Henry James, who has taken as his literary province what has been called “the international novel.” Few authors, even of the “Brahmin caste of New England,” have had greater early advantages. His father, Henry James, Senior, a theologian of high rank, whose works on such subjects as *The Secret of Swedenborg* and *Society the Redeemed Form of Man* are classics in their field, educated his son with extreme care, taking him abroad at the age of twelve to complete his studies at Geneva, Paris, Boulogne, and Bonn. It was during these early years that James laid the foundations of his knowledge of the languages and literatures, of the society and life of Europe,—a knowledge which he has since made thorough and deep by an almost continuous residence abroad. Since 1869 he has visited America but once, and then only for a short time. Few of our authors have become more completely cosmopolitan. He belongs almost as much to Paris and to London as to America.

James’ first literary work, contributed to the *Atlantic* and to other American magazines, was in the form of short stories and tales, many of them of a decidedly romantic and even sensational nature. In 1875 he published *Roderick Hudson*, his first long novel, and since that time he has continued to pour out a surprising



amount of work, issuing sometimes as many as three volumes in one year.

**His Novels.**—The term “the international novel,” which has been overworked in connection with Henry James, is used to designate that class of fiction which deals with the experiences of Americans in Europe or with those of Europeans in America. *The American*, James’ earliest international novel, deals with a man who, having risen, like Howells’ Silas Lapham, through his own efforts to fortune, seeks Europe, imagining that money will break down even social barriers; *Daisy Miller* pictures a pure-minded, impulsive, wilful, somewhat unsophisticated American girl as seen through European eyes. In *An International Episode* and *The Europeans* the author, reversing the glass, has thrown Europeans with their peculiarities and ideas upon a republican background.

No one was ever better equipped for this field of fiction. So long has he resided abroad that he has become almost “a man without a country,” one singularly fitted for accurate observation and impartial judgment. Yet few books, not even excepting Dickens’ *American Notes*, have raised such a storm of American protest as did these early novels from James’ pen. He was called untruthful and unpatriotic. It was charged that he had selected for analysis unusual types of Americans; that he had described but one side of their characters;

*A Passionate Pilgrim.* 1875.

*The American.* 1877.

*An International Episode.* 1878.

*The Europeans.* 1879.

*Daisy Miller.* 1879.

*The Portrait of a Lady.* 1881.

*Tales of Three Cities.* 1884.

*The Princess Casimassima.* 1886.

*The Bostonians.* 1886.

Many others.



that he had told half the truth and only half. Whatever the justice of these accusations, it remains true that James has not as yet given a single picture of the average American tourist in Europe, nor has he painted the portrait of a single typical American gentleman.

James' novels deal with externals. Character is shown through manners. The reader having seen an accurate photograph, and having listened to endless conversations, is left to draw his own conclusions. There is no passion, no glimpse into the heart. Everything is cold and correct and classical. In James' typical novels there is no plot, no hero, no *dénouement*, no rush of incident. The leading facts of *An International Episode* could be told on two pages. Everywhere there is analysis and photographic description. To James, as to Howells, a novelist is but a keen observer of life who lives, note-book in hand, to record what actually passes before his eyes; and a novel is but a study in sociology whose statements are facts as valuable in their way as are those in any other department of science.

**Sketches and Criticism.**—But, after all, the best work from James' pen is in his short stories and his critical sketches. His best tales, like "The Last of the Valerii" and "The Madonna of the Future," written before he had broken away from the influence of Hawthorne, and his later character sketches are among our very best short stories, while his *Partial Portraits*, his *French Poets and Novelists*, and his *Hawthorne*, written for the English Men of Letters Series, place him at

once near the head of the American school of critics. The chief charm of all of James' work lies in the exquisite finish of its style. In literary workmanship all of his tales are well-nigh faultless. Witty, sparkling, full of refinement and dainty grace, they hold the reader's attention, in spite of their poverty of incident, to the very end.

REQUIRED READING. — *Daisy Miller*; "The last of the Valerii"; "Alfred de Musset" in *French Poets and Novelists*.

### 3. EDWARD EVERETT HALE (b. 1822).

Although many, perhaps most, of the later novelists have been influenced by James and Howells, and have treated their subjects from the realistic standpoint, very few have carried realism to its extreme. Nearly all have seen the ideal in the real. Even "a writer so studiously and narrowly realistic as Edward Everett Hale," says Richardson, "finds no clod too mean on which to stand while his eager eyes turn with the upward look."

Edward Everett Hale, who is an influential clergyman of Boston, has won fame not only as a faithful pastor and a tireless philanthropist, as a scholarly lecturer and an able journalist, but as a short-story writer of the very first order and a historian of standard rank. His first story to win wide attention was "My Double and How He Undid Me," first published in 1859. Four years later, at the floodtide of the war, he published in

*If, Yes, and  
Perhaps.* 1868.  
*The Ingham  
Papers.* 1869.  
*Ten times One  
is Ten.* 1870.  
*His Level Best.*  
1873.  
*In His Name.*  
1874.  
*Philip Nolan's  
Friends.* 1876.

the *Atlantic* his most powerful creation, *Seven Spanish Cities.* 1883.  
 "The Man without a Country," a tale *Franklin in France.* 1887.  
 ringing with genuine patriotism. These Many others.  
 sketches, together with many others like  
 "The Brick Moon," "The Rag Man and Rag Woman,"  
 and "The Skeleton in the Closet," placed him at once  
 in the front rank of American writers of short stories.

Hale, like Frank Stockton, has rare skill in making the wildly improbable seem like the truth. "The Brick Moon," a tale as unreal as Poe's "Hans Pfaal" or Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon*, is so skillfully manipulated that it deceives the unwary; while it is commonly believed that "The Man without a Country" was actual history. Many of his books are full of a rollicking, contagious humor, and all are pervaded by a cheery optimism and a kindly spirit. As a historian he deserves more than a passing notice. His *Franklin in France* is the authority in its field. (See Hale's *A New England Boyhood.*)

SUGGESTED READING.—The five short stories mentioned above;  
*Ten times One is Ten.*

## II. NOVELISTS OF THE SOIL.

As has been already mentioned in the chapter dealing with the female novelists, there has been a marked tendency of late towards novels of the soil,—dialect novels full of local color and describing with photographic accuracy curious provincial types. This field, which has furnished to woman her greatest literary opportunity, and which has also been cultivated by

many strong novelists of the other sex, appears on the whole to be the most promising portion of our literary domain.

1. JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE (b. 1827).

It is a significant fact that the best studies of contemporary New England life and character have been made by women. The only male novelists who have made a substantial success in this department are THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON (b. 1823) and John Townsend Trowbridge. Higginson has won literary laurels in many fields. His poems are finished and beautiful, and his essays, like *Outdoor Papers*, *Oldport Days*, and *Atlantic Essays*, are valuable additions to our literature, but he will longest be remembered from his *Malbone, an Oldport Romance*, a book that breathes the life and spirit of New England.

Trowbridge, a native of Ogden, New York, but since 1848 a resident of Boston, has won success in three widely differing literary departments. By his numerous stories, contributed to *Our Young Folks*, of which he was for a time the editor, and to *The Youth's Companion*, he has made himself the most popular of American writers for boys; by his powerful novels like *Neighbor Jackwood* and *Coupon Bonds*, he has placed himself in the front rank of delineators of provincial life; while by his poems like "The Vagabonds," first published in the *Atlantic* of 1863, "Darius Green and his Flying Ma-

*Father Bright-hopes.* 1853.

*Neighbor Jackwood.* 1857.

*The Old Battleground.* 1859.

*Cudjo's Cave.* 1863.

*Coupon Bonds.* 1871.

chine," and many others, he has won general recognition as a true poet.

Trowbridge's pictures of New England both in prose and verse show evidence of a master hand. Not only are they minutely true in their characterizations and in their descriptions of externals, but they reveal a deep knowledge of the spirit of New England. Under the genuine, often rollicking, fun of the novelist's descriptions lurk all the pathos and tragedy of provincial life. It is this dramatic element, this perception of the ideal in the real, that will keep *Neighbor Jackwood* and "Darius Green" alive when the work of the mere realist is forgotten.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Neighbor Jackwood* and the poems "The Vagabonds," "At Sea," "Darius Green and his Flying Machine," "Midsummer," and "A Home Idyl."

## 2. EDWARD EGGLESTON (b. 1837).

Of all the Ohio Valley group of authors, the only novelist — save perhaps Alice Cary — who has thrown the spell of his genius over his native region is Edward Eggleston, whose broad descriptions of frontier life in Southern Indiana during the early "forties" are among the most enjoyable creations in our literature. Eggleston's early training gave him a peculiar fitness for his work. Born amid the scenes which he describes and serving for some years as a Methodist circuit rider through a wide

*The Hoosier Schoolmaster.*  
1871.

*The End of the World.* 1871.

*The Mystery of Metropolisville.*  
1873.

*The Circuit Rider.* 1874.  
*Roxy.* 1878.

*The Hoosier Schoolboy.*  
1883.

*The Graysons.*  
1887.

extent of frontier, he came into close contact with an interesting region during its most picturesque period. He at length drifted into journalism, and in 1870 went to New York, where he was for a time literary editor of *The Independent*. In 1871 he published his first novel, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, a work that is, perhaps, the freshest and most spontaneous, though not the most finished, of all his novels. It was in every sense a pioneer book. In 1871 the vast wealth of material that the West and the South were to furnish to the novelist lay undeveloped, almost unsuspected. Bret Harte's tales of California were studies of rough men in a wild environment; Eggleston's novels dealt with home life amid the privations and restrictions of the remote frontier. *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* was followed in rapid succession by other novels describing the same field, all of them full of quaint figures, boisterous fun, and picturesque situations. The value of these novels as pictures of one phase of American life is very great. Their author has the true pioneer earnestness, energy, and robustness,—qualities which he displays on every page. He describes with a photographic accuracy that is at times almost too minute, since his narrative becomes often not a work of art but a mere record of fact. But all faults of mere technique are easily overlooked when one considers the author's wealth of humor and pathos, his fidelity to nature, and his true dramatic power.

Despite his unqualified success as a novelist, it is quite probable that Dr. Eggleston will ultimately be



classed among the historians. Since 1879, when he resigned the pastorate of the Church of Christian Endeavor in Brooklyn, he has devoted his energies almost entirely to historical studies. For many years he has been gathering material for what he wishes to be his master work,—a comprehensive history of life in the thirteen Colonies. Judging from the chapters of this great work that have been already published from time to time in the *Century Magazine*, it is certainly safe to prophesy that it will rank very high among the standard histories. (See Vedder's *American Writers of Today*).

*Tecumseh.*  
1878.

*Pocahontas and Powhatan.*  
1879.

*Brant and Red Jacket.* 1879.

*Montezuma.*  
1880.

*History of the United States.*  
1888.

SUGGESTED READING. — *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*; *Tecumseh*.

### 3. GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE (b. 1844).

Like Eggleston and Harte and Miss Murfree, George W. Cable has added a new province to the domain of fiction. Born in the picturesque old city of New Orleans, and forced by poverty at an early age to enter upon a mercantile career, where he came daily in contact with people of every class, he learned by heart the habits of life and thought of the Louisiana Creoles, a people peculiarly distinct and individual. His first sketches of Creole life, which, after appearing in *Scribner's Monthly*, were collected under the title *Old Creole Days*, caused a decided sensation among novel readers.

*Old Creole Days.* 1879.

*The Grandis-simes.* 1880.

*Madame Delphine.* 1881.

*Dr. Sevier.*  
1883.

*Bonaventure.*  
1888.

*John March, Southerner.*  
1894.

As with Miss Murfree's sketches, which had just begun to appear in the *Atlantic*, it was hard to believe that such characters and such an environment really existed within the bounds of the United States. One year later there appeared the *Grandissimes*, the most powerful American novel written since the war, and this was followed in quick succession by *Madame Delphine* and *Dr. Sevier*.

These three novels represent the highest reach of Cable's literary achievement, and they form a trilogy that has been rarely surpassed in American literature. Not only do they describe a strange people and a peculiar social system, but they display these against a background even more strange and unreal. "The swamp country of Louisiana," says Cable, "is a region of incessant natural paradoxes;" it is a "fretwork of natural dykes and sluices," and "broad bayous on whose banks are tangled forests reeking with pestilential odors."

"From the boughs of the dark, broad-spreading, live oak, and the phantom-like arms of lofty cypresses, the long, motionless pendants of pale green moss point down to their inverted images in the unruffled waters beneath them. Nothing breaks the widespread silence. The light of the declining sun at one moment brightens the tops of the cypresses, at another glows like a furnace behind their black branches, or, as the voyager reaches a western turn of the bayou, swings slowly round and broadens down in dazzling crimsons and purples upon the mirror of the stream. Now and then, from out some hazy shadow, a heron, white or blue, takes silent flight, an alligator crossing the stream sends out long, tinted bars of widening ripple, or on some high, fire-blackened tree a flock of roosting vultures, silhouetted on the

sky, linger with half-opened, unwilling wing, and flap away by ones and twos until the tree is bare." — *The Creoles of Louisiana*.

These quaint characters and strange scenes have been portrayed by Cable with rare skill. He is not a cold realist. He describes with fulness and accuracy, yet he throws over all his landscapes the mellow atmosphere of romance. His Creoles are drawn with patient care from living models, yet they are colored with the warm pigments of imagination.

Cable's power as a novelist does not, as one critic has maintained, "come from his materials and his workmanship." His novels, while masterpieces of literary art, were written from the fulness of a heart sincere and pure. They are instinct with intensity and power. They are not confined merely to the surface of things. Their roots reach down deep into the aluvium that underlies all human experience. They are dramas teaching with new characters and strange scenery the old lessons of human life. (See Vedder's *American Writers of To-day*.)

REQUIRED READING. — *The Grandissimes*; "Au Large" in *Bonaventure*.

#### 4. THOMAS NELSON PAGE (b. 1853).

"As Mrs. Stowe was the potent chronicler of the harsher side of slave life, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, so Mr. Page is the faithful historian of the kindly relation of master and servant under the old régime." —

*H. V. Washington.*

The plantation negro with his curious dialect and his grotesque superstitions has furnished, when projected against the rich background of the days before

the war, a rare opportunity for a small group of Southern novelists. As portrayed by such writers as Joel Chandler Harris (b. 1848) and Thomas Nelson Page, he has become a new character in the world's fiction. Harris, a native of Georgia and for many years the editor of an influential journal, the *Atlanta Constitution*, has won a deserved fame with his record of the quaint philosophy and marvellous tales of Uncle Remus. No more charming contribution has ever been made to the department of folk-lore. The author has a lofty conception of his work, and his unqualified success is evidence that he has not fallen far short of realizing his ideal. "If the language of Uncle Remus," he says in his preface, "fails to give vivid tints of the really poetic imagination of the negro; if it fails to embody the quaint and homely humor which was his most prominent characteristic; if it does not suggest a certain picturesque sensitiveness, — a curious exultation of mind and temperament not to be expressed in words, — then I have reproduced the form of dialect merely, and not the essence, and my attempt may be counted a failure."

The most promising novelist of the South after George W. Cable, is THOMAS NELSON PAGE of Virginia, whose first significant tale, "Marse Chan," appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1883. The tales that followed this first success, "Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin'," "Meh Lady," and others, which were collected in 1887 under the title *In Ole Virginia*, rank among the most perfect of American short stories. Nearly all are tales of the old days,

full of sentiment and pathos and humor, and a charming simplicity. Page understands the Virginia negro as perfectly as Harris knows Uncle Remus, and all of his sketches are minutely true to nature in every particular. He has not always confined himself to dialect tales. His powerful sketches, "A Soldier of the Empire," and "Elsket," display a prodigality of power, which, if rightly directed, may in the future produce the long-looked-for great American novel.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Uncle Remus* ; *In Ole Virginia* ; "Elsket."

### III. THE ROMANTIC NOVELISTS.

The novelist of the purely romantic school does not seek to add to the world's fund of facts by making minute studies of types and environments; he does not aim to sharpen his reader's eyes to see more clearly the misery and filth about him; he does not care for the analysis of character for its own sake, nor for the teaching of moral lessons; his one thought is of pleasing his reader, of complying with that most natural of all demands, — "Tell me a story." With him a novel has a beginning and a middle and an end; and it deals with an idealized life, one that can for a moment lift its reader from his sordid surroundings and show him glimpses of the world of which he dreams. Not many of the later novelists have belonged unreservedly to the romantic school. It has been an era in which the study of peculiar environments has received unusual attention, yet here and there has been found one who has preferred to look away from the real into a world of his own creation.

## FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN (1828-1861).

The names of Fitz-James O'Brien and Theodore Winthrop (1828-1862), two young writers of great promise, members of the same regiment in the war in which they were to lose their lives, will go down in our literary history side by side. O'Brien, a native of Ireland who spent only the last ten years of his life in America, was a genius of almost the very first order. He was another Goldsmith, thriftless and wayward, generous even to excess, gentle and lovable. But, unlike Goldsmith, he had a fascinating personality and a mind electric in its action. Some of his most brilliant sketches were made at a sitting. "The Diamond Lens," his best-known creation, stands near the head of American short stories. Winthrop, who was a descendant of Governor Winthrop, is remembered from several powerful novels, posthumously published. Of these *John Brent*, a stirring tale full of the exhilaration and glow of life in the open air, is by far the best.

SUGGESTED READING. — "The Diamond Lens," "The Gallop of Three" in *John Brent*.

## EDWARD PAYSON ROE (1838-1888).

If he is most successful in literature who is most widely popular, and who exerts the most far-reaching influence, then E. P. Roe must be counted among the most successful of American novelists. Howells and James, Cable and Craddock, appeal to the literary connois-

*Barriers  
Burned Away.  
A Face Illu-  
minated.  
From Jest to  
Earnest.*



seur, to the educated and the cultured; Roe is the novelist of the great middle class which constitutes the reading majority. His novels are singularly fitted to appeal to the class for which they were written. Their author was a clergyman who wrote his books with a moral almost a religious purpose, a fact that disarmed the suspicious; he dealt with domestic scenes and with characters in humble life, and he mingled sentiment and sensation with a judicious hand. His novels have no high literary merit; their style is labored, often pretentious, and their plots and situations are conventional to a degree. "Through struggle to victory" might be given as the motto of them all, the victory in each being celebrated with the chiming of wedding bells.

*Opening of a  
Chestnut Burr.  
Nature's Serial  
Story.  
Near to  
Nature's Heart.*

But despite their artistic defects these novels cannot be overlooked by the literary historian. They have retained their popularity to a wonderful degree, and they have exerted no small influence for good on a large audience that cares little for more classic literature. The earnestness of the author, his faith and tenderness and deep conviction, are in all his work, and although his books cannot hope to go down to posterity with the great works of art, they must, nevertheless, be counted among the successful creations of American literature.

FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD (b. 1854).

Few American authors, not even excepting Henry James, have had a more cosmopolitan experience than

*Mr. Isaacs.*  
*Dr. Claudius.*  
*A Roman*  
*Singer.*  
*Zoroaster.*  
*Paul Patoff.*  
*Saracinesca.*  
*Sant' Ilario.*  
*Don Orsino.*  
*Casa Braccio.*  
 And others.

has Francis Marion Crawford. Born in Italy, where his father, Thomas Crawford, one of the greatest of American sculptors, was temporarily residing, he was educated at Harvard, at Trinity College, Cambridge, at Karlsruhe and Heidelberg, and at the University of Rome. After a wandering career, which included several years in India, he finally, in 1884, settled down near Sorrento, Italy, where he has since resided. His first novel, *Mr. Isaacs*, a romantic tale of India, appeared in 1882, and since that time he has produced novels at the rate of nearly two volumes each year.

As a novelist Crawford stands midway between the realists and the idealists. Some of his novels, like *Mr. Isaacs* and *The Witch of Prague*, are romances pure and simple, while others, like the *Saracinesca* group, incline somewhat toward realism; but in all of his work he has freely mingled the romantic with the real. "Mr. Crawford's artistic creed," says Vedder, "is not complex: the novel must deal chiefly with love; it must be clean and sweet, since its tale is for all mankind; it must be interesting; its realism must be of three dimensions, not flat and photographic; its romance must be truly human. What he tries to do is to 'make little pocket-theatres out of words.' "

It is as yet too early to assign to Crawford his place among American novelists, since his work has been before the public but little over a decade, but it can be said with safety that few novelists of the

younger group have given evidence of greater powers. There is a strong dramatic element about all of his best novels which lifts them at times into the highest realm of literary art. His chief defects thus far have been the result of hasty work. With mature powers and with more experience he may yet produce novels that will rank with the great masterpieces of English fiction.

SUGGESTED READING.—*Saracinesca*, and *The Novel: What It Is*.

### FRANK RICHARD STOCKTON (b. 1834).

“He is surely one of the most inventive of talents, discovering not only a new kind of humor and fancy, but accumulating an inexhaustible wealth of details in each fresh achievement, the least of which would be riches from another hand.” — *Howells*.

Frank R. Stockton is a writer who refuses to be classified. View him from any standpoint and he forms a class of one. He is distinctively a writer of short sketches, yet he cannot be classed with other American writers of short stories. He is not a realist. His sketches contain no analysis, they are true to no region as yet upon the maps, and his characters are creations rather than photographs. Yet he is really not a romanticist, for, while he deals with an idealized region and people, his sketches have little movement and almost no plot, and they are without sentiment or moral. While all of his tales are full of irresistible humor, he cannot be classed among the American humorists like Browne and Clemens.

*Rudder Grange.*  
*The Lady or the Tiger?*  
*The Late Mrs. Null.*  
*The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine.*  
*The Dusantes.*  
*The Hundredth Man.*  
*The Bee-Man of Orn.*  
*The Adventures of Captain Horn.*  
 And others.

He uses neither irreverence nor exaggeration, — his humor is Stocktonesque rather than American.

Stockton first came into general notice in 1879 through his sparkling story, *Rudder Grange*, which appeared in *Scribner's Monthly*. Shortly afterwards he published his typical sketch, "The Lady or the Tiger?" which immediately became one of the most famous of short stories. From that time he has been among the best-known and most popular of the later American writers.

The distinctive feature of Stockton's work consists in its strangely real yet unreal personages and situations. The author deals with a world of fantasy, yet so skilfully does he manipulate his materials that the most marvellous situations seem like mere common-places. His tales are logical throughout. They conduct the reader through the most absurd situations and the most unheard-of regions with absolute gravity, and the reader often finds himself accepting without a murmur conclusions which could be true only in a world of fantasy.

Stockton's longer stories, like *The Hundredth Man* and *The Late Mrs. Null*, are of very moderate interest. He is at his best in his short sketches, like "Negative Gravity," "The Transferred Ghost," and "The Remarkable Wreck of the Thomas Hyke." In this peculiar field he has had no rival.

**Other Novelists.** — Only a passing mention can be given to the majority of the younger romantic school. Their work has often been done with surpassing skill;

often it has been received with extraordinary favor by the public, but on the whole it has had no far-reaching significance. Among the more prominent of its members may be mentioned LEW WALLACE (b. 1823), whose *Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ*, with its graphic pictures of Oriental life during the first century, has had a greater popularity than any other book written since the war; CAPTAIN CHARLES KING (b. 1844), whose tales of army life on the plains stand alone in their field; JULIAN HAWTHORNE (b. 1846), a son of Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose *Bressant*, *Archibald Malmaison*, *Idolatry*, and *Sebastian Strome* are full of weird conceptions; and ARTHUR SHERBURNE HARDY (b. 1847), whose epigrammatic and finished romances, *But Yet a Woman* and *Passé Rose*, with their exquisite individualizing of character and their almost perfect literary art, are among the strongest and most stimulating productions of recent fiction.

### XXX.

#### THE HUMORISTS.

**American Humor.**—The most original literary achievement of the present period, the one perhaps that will stand most sharply prominent when the era fades farther into the past, has been the development of what has been called “literature of the soil.” The rise and growth of the novel of provincial life has already been dwelt upon; it remains to consider one more literary product that smacks of the soil,—the work of the American humorist.

Humor is no new thing in our literature; the first real American book, *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, was broadly, irresistibly humorous, while Holmes and Lowell, and many another of the earlier school, were mirth-makers of the first order. Yet Irving's humor is of the English type. It depends on characterization, on minute description, on sympathetic insight. Holmes' brilliant *bon mots* are more French than American. Lowell, it is true, caught the true Yankee drollery to perfection, yet his Hosea Biglow does not represent the whole American people. While the humor of all these masters is of an imperishable kind, it does not, as a European would say, have the flavor of the American soil. It remained for Artemus Ward and his



followers to interpret the true American humor, which, while it may be of inferior quality, is, nevertheless, something new under the sun.

The Americans are a nation of jokers. They "take a facetious view of life," says Professor Boyesen, "and extract the greatest possible amount of amusement out of every situation. It is by this trait, above all, that Americans are differentiated from all other nations. It is apt to be one of the first observations of the intelligent foreigner who lands upon our shores, that all things, ourselves included, are with us legitimate subjects for jokes. An all-levelling democracy has tended to destroy the sense of reverence which hedges certain subjects with sanctity, guarding them against the shafts of wit." The chief ingredients of the representative American humor seem to be irreverence, exaggeration, and a skilful mingling of incongruities.

CHARLES FARRAR BROWNE, "ARTEMUS WARD"  
(1834-1867).

"The humorist who first gave to the world a taste of the humor which characterizes the whole American people." — *Howells*.

The name of Charles Farrar Browne calls forth both a smile and a tear. If ever America produced a genius, one who delivered his message because it was in him and must come forth, then Browne was the man. For him the world was upside down, the incongruous was the real, and he could no more help saying "funny things" than he could help being natural.

*Artemus Ward:  
His Book.*

*Artemus Ward:  
His Travels.*

*Artemus Ward  
in London.*

Even his life was full of incongruities. He wrote the works that made his name almost a synonym for mirth, while the shadow of an incurable disease was lowering darkly over him, and he died with a jest upon his lips at the very opening of his career.

The leading facts in Browne's life are soon told. Born at Waterford, Maine, in a humble home, he early turned for support, like Taylor and Howells and many another American author, to the printer's trade, which he followed in different capacities almost to the end of his life. He was connected with various journals, both as writer and editor, in Boston, Toledo, and Cleveland, and finally, in 1860, he drifted to New York, where he was for a time connected with the brilliant but short-lived comic weekly, *Vanity Fair*. During the last years of his life he lectured extensively both in America and England. His peculiar humor so captivated the British that they hailed him as "Artemus the delicious," and even made him one of the editors of *Punch*. But he lived only a few months to enjoy his well-earned honors.

The distinctive feature of Browne's humor; one that characterizes all later American products in the same field, is its seemingly plausible situations and its unexpected turns. "Artemus Ward," the proprietor of the famous panorama, did not slap his knee and roar with the audience; but with a serious face and a somewhat melancholy voice he recited his story, with a perplexed and surprised look when his hearers found anything in his remarks at which to laugh. His most telling jokes

were told with the utmost plausibility when the audience was most completely off its guard.

Browne has added a new figure to the gallery of American fiction. His "Artemus Ward," whom he represented as a droll, unlettered, somewhat coarse travelling showman, is as original as "Natty Bumppo" and as thoroughly American. (See Haweis' *American Humorists*.)

SUGGESTED READING. — *Artemus Ward: His Travels*.

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, "MARK TWAIN"

(b. 1835).

"Mark Twain's strong points are his facile but minute observation, his power of description, a certain justness and right proportion, and withal a great firmness of touch and a peculiar—I had almost said personal—vein of humor." — *H. R. Haweis*.

The work of acquainting the world with "the humor which characterizes the whole American people," which was begun by Browne, has been continued to the present day by Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He, indeed, is the representative of "the *whole* American people." He smacks strongly of the soil, not of one locality alone like so many of our writers, but of the whole broad continent. Few men have had a more varied experience. Born in a frontier town in Missouri at a time when that State was in its most picturesque phase, he passed his boyhood days in an environment peculiarly Ameri-

*Innocents  
Abroad.* 1869.  
*Roughing It.*  
1872.

*The Adventures  
of Tom Sawyer.*  
1876.

*A Tramp  
Abroad.* 1880.  
*The Prince and  
the Pauper.*  
1882.

*Life on the  
Mississippi.*  
1883.

*Huckleberry  
Finn.* 1884.

*A Yankee at  
King Arthur's  
Court.* 1889.

can. After receiving a liberal education in that most practical of universities, a country printing office, he began while yet a mere boy a wandering career as a compositor, during which he lived successively in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and New York. In 1851 he abandoned the composing room, and for the next few years was a pilot on the Mississippi River. He next turned westward. He was appointed Secretary of the Territory of Nevada in 1861, and during the next six years he was successively an editor in Virginia City, a miner in Nevada and California, a reporter in San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands, and finally a lecturer throughout California. In 1867 he came East again, published *The Jumping Frog and Other Sketches*, under the pseudonym "Mark Twain," and started on the European tour that was to make him famous. *Innocents Abroad*, which appeared two years later, placed him at once among the most popular of American writers. After a short journalistic career he at length settled in Hartford, Connecticut, where he has since resided, a near neighbor to Mrs. Stowe and Charles Dudley Warner.

The chief elements of Mark Twain's humor are irreverence and exaggeration. *Innocents Abroad* is the very antipodes of works like *Pencillings by the Way*. It is Europe without its haze of romance, as seen by the cold eyes of a Yankee reporter to whom nothing is sacred. In works like *Roughing It* and *Life on the Mississippi*, the humor consists largely of exaggeration which is humorous because of the extreme incongruity of the

objects compared, yet, notwithstanding its obvious impossibility and its utter absurdity, the author tells his story with such innocence and seriousness that it is only with a struggle that the reader refrains from believing every word.

But Mark Twain's humor is not always a mere bundle of aimless absurdities. "He is supposed to lie like the truth," says one critic, "yet in my opinion he oftener speaks truth like lies." Few men hate cant and shams more intensely than he. His irreverent jokes in *Innocents Abroad* arose from no lack of a sense of beauty. There are few more beautiful descriptions in our literature than his well-known comparison between lakes Como and Tahoe. His sarcasm is aimed at that class of tourists who go into raptures at the bidding of the guide-book simply because it is the proper thing to do. *Innocents Abroad* was a book with a mission. It cleared the atmosphere of a surprising amount of false enthusiasm; "it laughed away," says Vedder, "the sentimental, the romantic book of travels."

But if Mark Twain's jokes, delightful as they sometimes are, were all that were to keep him from oblivion, he might be ranked as only a passing phenomenon. His writings, unlike Artemus Ward's, are not mere fusillades of jokes. All of his books have a skilfully drawn, even delicate, background of description and characterization. He would still rank high as an author had he not written a single humorous passage. His graphic descriptions of life and scenery on the Mississippi, in the mountains and mines of Nevada, Utah, and California



during their most picturesque era, are photographically true, in every particular. Taken for all in all, he is the prince of entertainers. He is intensely original. He mingles boisterous fun with delicate description, broad characterization with skilful narrative, and over all he throws the charm of a rare personality, one peculiarly American, and as impossible to define as is the charm of the Indian Summer.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Innocents Abroad*; *Roughing It*.

**Other Humorists.** — Of the vast amount of humorous literature that has surged through the periodicals of half a century, only a very small amount has been saved from oblivion. Professional humorists from the days of Seba Smith, who lampooned the administration of Jackson, down to Burdette and Bill Nye, have abounded, but those who have created fun and nothing else have had for their reward only a contemporary fame. Among the few who deserve a passing mention are HENRY W. SHAW, "Josh Billings" (1818–1885), who mingled with his fun some very sound maxims, and DAVID ROSS LOCKE, "Petroleum V. Nasby" (1833–1888), whose humorous, satirical letters from the "Confedrit X Roads" were widely influential during the reconstruction period following the Civil War.

### THE ESSAYISTS.

JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND (1819–1881).

J. G. Holland was born in Belchertown, Massachusetts, July 24, 1819, and was educated in the North-



ampton high school. After studying medicine, which he practised for some years in Springfield, he went into the South; taught school for a time in Richmond, Virginia, and still later was superintendent of schools in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Upon his return to the North he became connected with *The Springfield Republican*, and in 1870 he was made editor of *Scribner's Monthly*, now *The Century*, a position which he held until his death.

Holland's writings fall naturally into three classes: poems, novels, and essays and papers. His fame as a poet depends on his long narrative poems, *Bitter Sweet* and *Katrina*, which, despite their moralizing tendencies and their manifest lack of poetic inspiration, were at one time highly popular with the lovers of the sentimental. His novels deserve more careful attention. They are faithful studies of American life and character. "None of our writers," says Richardson, "better understood the average national heart." But Holland was not a great literary artist and he has not portrayed in enduring colors this life which he understood. He was first of all a moralist. He was at his best in his lay sermons to the young and in his papers on familiar subjects. The didactic and the moralizing are in everything he wrote, even in his poems and novels. His Timothy Titcomb letters are excellent. Their style is plain and homely, their subjects are often commonplace, yet they set true ideals before the reader

*The Bay Path.*  
1857.

*Timothy Titcomb's Letters to Young People.* 1858.

*Bitter Sweet.*  
1858.

*Mrs. Gilbert's Career.* 1860.

*Plain Talks on Familiar Subjects.* 1865.

*Katrina.* 1866.

*Arthur Bonnicastle.* 1873.

*Sevenoaks.*  
1875.

Many others.

in such an earnest, honest way that they can hardly fail to impress and benefit.

As editor of an influential magazine, Holland was for a time a conspicuous figure. His work was widely read and enthusiastically reviewed, but time seems to be reversing the judgment of his contemporaries, and the author has been of late more and more neglected.

### DONALD GRANT MITCHELL (b. 1822).

"Mr. Mitchell more truly than any other American writer has inherited the literary tradition of Irving's time and school. There is the same genial and sympathetic attitude toward his readers; the same tenderness of feeling; and in style that gentle elaboration and that careful, high-bred English which contrasts so strikingly with the brusque, nervous manner now in fashion." — *Beers*.

Another author who has appealed widely to lovers of the sentimental is Donald G. Mitchell, whose *Reveries of a Bachelor* and *Dream Life*, written under the pseudonym "Ik Marvel," have retained their

*Reveries of a Bachelor*. 1850.

*Dream Life*. 1851.

*My Farm of Edgewood*. 1863.

*Wet Days at Edgewood*. 1865.

*Dr. Johns* — (a novel). 1866.

*Old Story-Tellers*. 1877.

*English Lands, Letters, and Kings*. 1895.

And others.

early popularity. They are books for young men who are inclined to look at the future through a romantic haze. They "wear for me," says the author, "the illusions and the fleeting, prismatic hues which bubbles always wear, and which youth is always used to blow and to follow with eager eye till the iridescence be gone and the bubbles too." It seems to be an assured fact that Mitchell will go down to posterity as the author of these two books, yet from a literary standpoint they are far below much of

his later work. They are full of youthful exuberance and an excess of color which is toned down in his Edgewood series and his later sketches. His style at its best is singularly easy and graceful. His delicate transitions from humor to pathos, his stingless satire, his manifest refinement, and his dreamy outlook upon life combine to give his style a rare charm. His latest work, *English Lands, Letters, and Kings*, is in many respects his best. Its graphic pictures and accurate characterizations bring a new charm to the old subject of English history.

The author has resided for many years near New Haven, Connecticut, on the farm which he has made famous in his Edgewood series.

SUGGESTED READING. — *Reveries of a Bachelor; Wet Days at Edgewood.*

#### CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER (b. 1829).

"Warner is chiefly, one might almost say always, the essayist. His humor is not wit; he pleases by the diffused light which illuminates his writings on various themes, not by any startling or sensational effect. American humor as displayed in his masterpiece, *My Summer in a Garden*, is shown in its better estate. Warner's intellectual kinship is with Irving, Curtis, and Holmes, not with Artemus Ward or Mark Twain." — *Richardson*.

Charles Dudley Warner was born in Plainfield, Massachusetts, Sept. 12, 1829. A delightful glimpse of his boyhood days, as well as of the somewhat primitive and Puritanical New England of half a century ago, may be had in his *Being a Boy*, a book which, though written in the third person, is prevailingly auto-

biographical. The background of the book is the little Massachusetts town of Charlemont, which was the scene

*Being a Boy.* 1867.

*My Summer in a Garden.* 1870.  
*Saunterings.* 1870.

*Back-log Studies.* 1872.

*Baddeck and that Sort of Thing.* 1874.

*My Winter on the Nile.* 1876.  
*In the Levant.* 1877.

*In the Wilderness.* 1878.

*Captain John Smith.* 1881.

*Washington Irving.* 1881.

*Their Pilgrimage.* 1886.

*On Horseback.* 1888.

*A Little Journey in the World.* 1889.

*The Golden House.* 1895.

of the author's life from his sixth to his fourteenth year. From Charlemont he removed to Cazenovia, New York, and in 1851 he was graduated at Hamilton College. During the next nine years he was successively a surveyor on the Missouri frontier, a law student at the University of Pennsylvania, and a practising lawyer in Chicago. In 1860 he was invited by United States Senator Hawley, who had been attracted by several letters contributed by Warner to *The Hartford Press*, of which he was the proprietor, to become the assistant editor of that paper. One year later, in the absence of his employer, who went to the front during the war, Warner became editor of *The Press*, and when, in 1867, it was consolidated with *The Hartford Courant*, he was made co-editor with Hawley, a position which he has held to the present time.

Warner's first significant book, *My Summer in a Garden*, was published in the columns of *The Hartford Courant* in 1870. It appeared, indeed, during a period of notable beginnings. The three years from 1869 to 1872 witnessed the publication of the first novel by W. D. Howells and of the first significant work by "H. H.," Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, Edward Eggleston, and John Burroughs. The earliest stars in

the bright constellation of the later writers were beginning to appear, and the reading public was eagerly scanning each new light, conjecturing if perchance it might not be a new planet. The reception of *My Summer in a Garden* was most enthusiastic. The charming vein of humor that ran richly through the book caused its author to be classified at once with the humorists. But the careful reader soon discovered other and even more delightful features. The mellow atmosphere of the book, its graceful style and its rare finish, are worthy of Irving, or, indeed, of Charles Lamb. His next publication, *Saunterings*, which consists of his letters written to *The Courant* during a visit to Europe, was followed by *Back-log Studies*, a work equal in merit to *My Summer in a Garden*. With these two volumes Warner placed himself in the very front rank of American essayists. A delicate humor never too broad, an exquisite fancy which hovers playfully about every figure and allusion, and withal a firmness of touch which gives constantly an air of finality of decision and unshaken confidence, are found on every page.

Warner's next group of books, the notes of his travels at home and abroad, differ from his first essays only in the fact of their foreign background. *My Winter on the Nile* and *In the Levant* recall constantly the genial Howadji. Neither Warner nor Curtis wrote mere guide-book records of their Oriental journeys. For a simple itinerary, with names and dates and typical episodes, one can go to the books of a score of minor Eastern travellers. In works like *Nile Notes* and *My Winter*



on the Nile we catch glimpses, not only of the actual Egypt of to-day, but of the land of the Nile, with its dreams of the past and its mellow atmosphere of romance. In his journeys through his own land Warner is still the essayist. He writes enthusiastically of the new South, of the magnificent promise of the great West, yet these sketches, humorous, finished, sparkling, are essays rather than books of travel.

One more extended essay remains to be mentioned,—his sketch of the life of Irving. The subject was one for which he was peculiarly fitted. In Irving he found an author after his own heart, and he has portrayed the life of the genial Knickerbocker with rare sympathy and insight.

Warner has of late years tried his hand at fiction, and with considerable success, but while his three novels, *Their Pilgrimage*, *A Little Journey in the World*, and *The Golden House*, show an increasing mastery of the novelist's art, they are not to be compared with his best work in the field which he has made peculiarly his own.

REQUIRED READING. — *My Summer in a Garden*; *Back-log Studies*.

#### JOHN BURROUGHS (b. 1837).

“Mr. Burroughs is above all the high priest of the farm. Country life, scenes, sounds, tastes, and smells are his great interest, and in writing of these he strikes a chord which no other prose writer, on this side of the Atlantic at least, has yet touched.”

One more important characteristic of the present period remains to be mentioned, — the rise and development of the so-called out-of-door school (p. 227). This



is, in reality, only a branch of the great school of writers of "literature of the soil" which has been the characterizing feature of the era since the war. The leader of the group has been, without question, John Burroughs, who, following the path indicated by Thoreau, has added a new interest to the study of nature. It is a hasty criticism, however, that classes Burroughs merely as a disciple of Thoreau. He received, without a doubt, his first inspiration from that great opener of blind eyes, but a close comparison of the writings of each will show few real points of similarity. In a sense Burroughs is a pioneer in his field. Thoreau has never been equalled as a minute observer of the phenomena of the woods and fields. His pictures move before the reader like a series of instantaneous photographs. He invites constantly to the trackless forest and to primeval conditions; yet even when lost with him in the very heart of nature we never lose sight of Thoreau, the philosopher, the mystic, and the reformer. Burroughs has approached nature from a different standpoint. He has mingled the scientific with the poetic, and, while keeping the facts firmly in his grasp, he has humanized and idealized nature. Unlike Thoreau, he has kept himself in the background. He seldom moralizes; he is never mystical. He delights in the borderlands between the wild and the civilized; in foot-paths, wild bees, birds that follow in the footsteps of man, apples, cows, fox-hounds, springs, trout streams, and wild berries. It pleases him to attribute to the denizens of the forest human motives and feelings, and to trace analogies even

between the animate and the inanimate. Yet, notwithstanding his playful fancy and his love of the poetic, his observations are all scientifically accurate and minutely faithful to nature.

Often Burroughs leads us from the fields into his library and discourses charmingly of "Birds and Poets," of "True Realists," of Whitman, Carlyle, Emerson, Matthew Arnold, and Thoreau. His judgments are not always weighty, but they are invariably fresh and delightful. In whatever field he enters, he opens new vistas.

*Wake-Robin.*  
1871.

*Winter Sun-  
shine.*

*Birds and  
Poets.*

*Locusts and  
Wild Honey.*

*Pepacton.*

*Fresh Fields.*

*Signs and  
Seasons.*

*Indoor Studies.*

*Riverby.*

Burroughs resides in Esopus, in his native State of New York. Since 1872 he has been an examiner of national banks, but the duties of his profession are not exacting, and he finds abundant time for the studies that he loves.

REQUIRED READING.—*Wake-Robin*; *Birds and Poets*; *Locusts and Wild Honey*.

### THE LATER HISTORIANS.

The great school of American historians led by Prescott and Motley has been succeeded by another almost as brilliant. Never has there been a time when history has been written more carefully or in greater quantity. The early history of America in all its phases and localities has been studied with such extreme care that few unexplored fields remain for the historian. So high have the standards become in this department that a

history, to gain the attention of readers, must possess extraordinary merits. From the scores of really eminent historians of this later group only a few can be selected here for prominent mention.

### JUSTIN WINSOR (b. 1831).

"The most thoroughly skilled of our scholars as a bibliographer and a cartographer." — *George E. Ellis.*

The impersonation of the modern methods of dealing with history is Justin Winsor, the learned librarian of Harvard College. Taking as his field the early history of North America, he has ransacked all possible sources of material, and as a result his works are veritable mines of facts. He has spared no labor in gathering old maps and charts and reports, in preparing exhaustive bibliographies, and in indicating sources of materials. In his last three works he has undertaken a comprehensive and exhaustive series of histories describing the discovery and settlement of America. Not only are these works exceedingly rich in the materials for history, but they are philosophical and literary as well. They throw a new and somewhat startling light upon Columbus; they show the great influence that the physical geography of the continent has had upon its history, and they picture with a firm hand the causes and the results of the Franco-English struggle in America. Dr. Winsor's style is precise and forcible, and his histo-

*Narrative and  
Critical History  
of America.*

*Reader's Hand-  
book of the  
American  
Revolution.*

*Christopher  
Columbus.*

*The Mississippi  
Basin.*

*Cartier to  
Frontenac.*

ries are valuable not only as works of reference, but as literary creations.

### JOHN FISKE (b. 1842).

John Fiske, a native of Hartford, Connecticut, and a graduate of Harvard University, has won a leading place

*Myths and  
Myth-Makers.*  
1872.

*Outlines of Cos-  
mic Philosophy.*  
*Darwinism and  
Other Essays.*

*Excursions of  
an Evolutionist.*  
*The Destiny of  
Man.*

*American Polit-  
ical Ideas.*

*The Critical  
Period of  
American His-  
tory.* 1888.

*The Beginnings  
of New Eng-  
land.*

*The American  
Revolution.*

*Civil Govern-  
ment in the  
United States.*

*The Discovery  
of America.*

both as a philosopher and a historian. His philosophical writings, since by Webster's definition they do not belong strictly to the realm of literature, need not be considered here. They interpret the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and their great value is shown from the fact that so profound a thinker as Charles Darwin, after reading *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*, wrote to the author, "I never in my life read so lucid an expositor, and therefore thinker, as you are."

Like Justin Winsor, Fiske has made a specialty of early American history. He, too, is engaged on a comprehensive history of the discovery and settlement of America, although from a somewhat different standpoint from his fellow-historian. He has already published *The Discovery of America, with Some Account of Ancient America and the Spanish Conquest*, the first volume of the series and in many respects the best that has yet appeared; *The Beginnings of New England*; or, *The Puritan Theocracy in its Relations to Civil and Religious Liberty*; *The*

*American Revolution; The Critical Period of American History, 1783-1789*; and he is at present publishing the history of the settlement of Virginia. As a historian Fiske is distinguished not only for his mastery of materials and his general accuracy, but for his philosophic insight, his breadth of view, and his lucid and brilliant literary style. He is a philosopher writing history; he strives constantly to trace the great fundamental principles which underlie the development of American civilization and national character. Yet his histories are not dry, lifeless arguments; they are full of vivid pictures and they are interesting even to those who care little for their philosophy.

During the greater part of Fiske's life he has been connected with Harvard University either as a student, lecturer, assistant librarian, or overseer. Since 1879 he has devoted himself almost entirely to lecturing and writing, making his home at Cambridge.

**Other Historians.** — The American historian during all periods has devoted himself, with few exceptions, to American themes, and as a result the history of the United States during every period since the memorable voyage of Columbus has been treated with great care. The labor expended by some of these historians has been marvellous. Herbert Howe Bancroft (b. 1832) has filled forty volumes with the history of the Pacific coast, while Henry Adams has filled nine volumes with the history of the administrations of Jefferson and Madison. Among the best known of the other later historians are Samuel Adams Drake (b. 1833), who has written enter-



tainingly of *The Making of New England* and *The Making of the Great West*; James Schouler (b. 1839), who has furnished, with his *History of the United States from 1783 to 1861*, a valuable study of a most important period, and John Bach McMaster (b. 1852), who is covering the same period with a *History of the People of the United States*, a work which promises in accuracy of statement and brilliancy of style to become the standard history of the period. Among the literary historians of the era only three merit special attention. E. C. Stedman has been already considered; Charles Francis Richardson (b. 1851), with his scholarly and graceful survey of the American writers, has made himself the standard historian of our literature, while Moses Coit Tyler (b. 1835), with his more comprehensive work which covers as yet only the Colonial Era, has produced a history which, since within its limits it is exhaustive, is of the greatest value to the student of the colonial writers.

Viewed from the standpoint of our recent historical product, the future of American history seems bright indeed. Other literary fields, however, seem to be lying in the shadow. "Just now," says Edgar Fawcett, "it is surely the twilight of our American novelists." There is a "twilight of the poets," says Stedman, "succeeding to the brightness of their first diurnal course." But the dusk has not yet gathered about our historians. Who shall say that Stedman is not right, that the darkness over the rest of our literary firmament is not the sure promise of a new morning?



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